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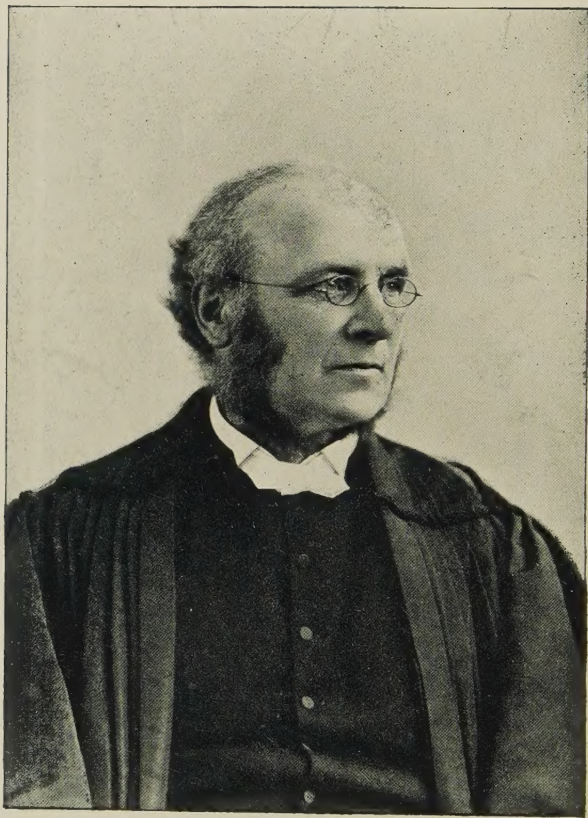


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## ANCHORS OF THE SOUL







Ever yours.

Broske Herford.

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# ANCHORS OF THE SOUL

Sermons

BY THE REV.

BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.

*Minister of Arlington Street Church, Boston, U.S.A.  
and Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead*

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY THE REV.

PHILIP H. WICKSTEED, M.A.

London

PHILIP GREEN, 5, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1904



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## NOTE

Nearly all the Sermons in this Volume were selected by the late Dr. Brooke Herford, with a view to publication, some time before his death. His eldest daughter, assisted by the Revs. Henry Gow, F. W. Stanley, and W. G. Tarrant, made the final selection. The Sermons are representative of the pulpit utterances of Dr. Herford in the later years of his ministry in Boston, U.S.A., and in London.

The warm welcome which his Sermons of 'Courage and Cheer' received on their publication a few years ago has encouraged his friends to issue this further volume. They have been fortunate in securing, as an Introduction, a Biographical Sketch of the preacher, written by the Rev. Philip H. Wicksteed.

LONDON, *October*, 1904.



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PUBLICATIONS BY BROOKE HERFORD.

'Home Pages' (1858-1872), Editor of 'The Unitarian Herald' (1861-1876), Memoir of Travers Madge (1867), Editor of Baines' 'History of Lancashire' (1870), 'The Story of Religion in England' (1879), Sermons of Courage and Cheer (1894), Religious Thought as interpreted by Unitarians (1895), The Small End of Great Problems (1902).



## BROOKE HERFORD.

BROOKE HERFORD was born at Altrincham on February 21st, 1830, the eighth child and the fourth son that had survived infancy of John and Sarah Herford. His mother,<sup>1</sup> after giving birth to one more daughter, died, when Brooke was about two years old. She was only forty, but she had already exercised a deep and wide influence; for she had been a beloved and successful teacher. In her—at once spontaneous and systematic in her response to the varied claims of her life, with a marked love of nature, an inventive knack of diagrammatic presentation of history, and a pronounced artistic gift,—we seem already to recognise many of Brooke Herford's happiest characteristics, some of which were to reappear in the third generation.

While Brooke was still a child his father married Helen Ryland, of Birmingham; the 'more than mother,' after whom he named his eldest daughter.

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Edward Smith, of Birmingham.

He could never recall his own early years with any vividness, so that we have scarcely any childish recollections to record. He remembered the first service he ever attended, when he was about four, at the old Blackley Chapel, and how the minister laid his hand on his head and gave him his blessing ; and when he was seven years old, he remembered, he was sent to a riding school ; and he declares that he went a ride of sixteen miles, after a time, in the course of which he ' fell off several times.' A little later he recalls his daily ' walk of two miles to and from school across wild country fields and through lonely paths, which started just opposite St. Luke's Church, Cheetham Hill Road, and came out by some old dye works, a little above the Grove Inn on the Bury New Road.' The history of the next few years can be told in his own words.

' It was only when I was about seventeen that I seem to have begun to live. Before that only vague recollections of boyhood and school. I was at the school of Rev. John Relly Beard, at Higher Broughton, from eight to fourteen : a good school, far ahead of the average schools of the time. I especially remember still the excellence of the teaching in geography, and getting a prize for maps drawn from memory, one of the specialities in that matter ; and the rigorous and constant drilling in mental arithmetic, and in the multiplication table up to  $20 \times 20$ , for which I have been

grateful ever since. Not much Latin. Kept in the grammar and Delectus for three years as was universal in those days, so that when I left, though I had read Cæsar and much of Virgil, I never read with ease, or any literary feeling. It was all mere grind and task work. As for Greek, I was still in the verbs.

' At two months short of fourteen, I left school and went to my father's counting-house. He was a private wine merchant of the old school, that prided itself on having nothing to do with the retail trade—fast becoming the most profitable however—so that his old 'family connexion' was rather left in the rear as far as profit went, but was eminently respectable. My father had added to his original business an insurance agency for the old 'Globe' fire and life office. These two branches of business brought to his counting-house many of the foremost old Manchester citizens—Mark Philips, Potters, Ashtons,—magistrates, aldermen, guardians of the poor, as well as leading merchants and manufacturers. My father was a public spirited man, and a sturdy Liberal—they called them Whigs then, in the 'forties'—was on the Council, and I think, for a time, on the Board of Guardians, and so I used to hear many a discussion of public affairs.

' When I was nearly sixteen, I was sent to Paris to live there for six months, and learn French. Mr. William Thompson, with whom I lived,

(*au quatrième*, at the corner of Rue Lafitte on the Boulevard des Italiens) was in the Paris agency of the great Bordeaux firm of Barton and Guestier, and Mrs. Thompson was a very charming French lady, who though she could speak English perfectly, never spoke it with me; so that I made good progress. In a month I could go about by myself, to shops or other errands in the city, and by the time I had been there four months, I spoke French just as well as English. A pleasant memory of those days, is, a month's visit to Bordeaux and the neighbouring district. It was at the vintage time, and I was in the midst of it all and saw it all, the grape getting, treading the great wine presses, and watching all the processes by which the great heaps of crushed and trodden grapes became gradually the 'Chateau Latour' and 'Chateau Lafitte' of commerce. The Bartons of Chateau Langod, whose guest I was, were full of kindness, and took me many a drive through all their wine growing land, ending with a three days' excursion into the White Wine District, where I remember staying at Chateau Barsac, and hearing all about the Sauterne and Muscatelle vintages, so that I got quite an insight into the making and qualities of the Bourdeaux wines, and an interest which led my father to entertain good hopes that I should soon be useful to him in business.

'At the end of six months, I left Paris, to take

my former place at my father's office. But that French visit has been among the pleasant memories of my life. My friends made a real home for me, and I remember well all the scenes of that Paris life,—the Tuileries, the Louvre, the Place Vendôme, the Boulevards, the great baths in the Seine—Versailles—the markets, the churches. It was the older Paris of 1846—Louis Philippe was still on the throne, and on the opposite corner of the Rue Lafitte was an old tower, with sugar-loaf roof, survival of an older Paris still, but which has since disappeared.

‘That six months in France, however, is most notable in my life by its ageing effect. A lad of sixteen in England is still a boy, and even the most careless of men would hesitate to talk before him of the things which men of the world would talk of freely among themselves. In France a lad of sixteen is much older in the treatment he receives, in the way older men talk before him. That is flattering to a lad, and interesting to him, and I came back to England feeling a good deal older in knowledge of the world than I was when I went there.

‘Fortunately, however, the work that was waiting for me was at once hard and interesting. My father was one of the old school of business men, who believed in a lad learning his business from the ground up, and so while I had a desk in the office, a large part of my time was spent in



rough hard work among the cellar-men, decent hard-working men, who made me work hard too. In the office, too, though I had every kind of book-keeping to do, and learned a good knowledge of accounts, I learned much more also. My father's insurance agency for the 'Globe' took me much about the town, with the insurance clerk, to help him in taking down particulars of the various risks, and measurements of warehouses and other premises offered for insurance. And a natural faculty for drawing soon made me the virtual surveyor and plan-drawer. It seemed to me that I had had the drawing of the plans for half the warehouses in old Manchester, and I had a pride in doing them in good shape, as if they had come out of an architect's office; getting, in the architect's office in a floor above our counting-house, hints and teaching which gradually gave me an aptitude for architectural drawing which has been of use to me all my life.

'I always like to recall all that hard business work of those office years because it was such capital training. I had no idea of ever coming to any work but that of business; but in after years, when I had become a minister, I have often said that that rough and ready drilling in work and book-keeping, and doing the lower drudgery of a counting-house, had done more to make a man of me, a man as the foundation of a minister, than all the special training of the Divinity course at College

'I was indeed far enough from any thought of the ministry. I was not irreligious. My mother had brought me up to feel the saying of a morning and evening prayer a part of my life,—though often hurried over and forgotten. And my father had had a little family prayer every morning, which if it did not make much impression from day to day, still gave life something of a higher tone. And in his Sunday Bible reading I learned to talk and think quite freely about the Bible histories, and to leave behind, as of no divine quality, whatever seemed to grate upon my sense of right.'

In 1846 John Herford practically retired from business, and Brooke, still at work in the office, went into lodgings with his brother Charles, 'very, very lonely it was, for he was a grown man and I only a raw boy.' 'The first Sunday of my lonely life, after my mother was gone, was, I think, the turning point of my life. Hour after hour that evening I wandered up and down the Greenheys fields, crying often very sadly with the sense of unutterable loneliness. It came to me that now I was adrift to sink or swim as I would. There was nothing *now* to hinder me in going as fast as I liked in the evil ways which I was beginning to enter,<sup>1</sup> and a kind of terror took hold

<sup>1</sup> General spiritual and moral slackness or indifference, presumably. There is not the slightest evidence of **any more** definite ground for self-reproach.

of me in that very feeling of how perfectly free the evil way was. That night saw my heart turned to God in very earnest and real prayer for help to give myself to a true life.'

He was already hard at work in Sunday School and other such occupations at Mosley Street, where his brothers Edward, Charles, William, and Vernon had all preceded him ; and already one of the great forming influences of his life had begun to work upon him in the friendship of Philip Carpenter, then minister at Warrington.

Philip Carpenter would not talk to him on the question (dear as it was to his own heart) of teetotalism, prevented by an 'honourable wish,' not to grieve his father. But that set Brooke thinking all the harder for himself, and he became a convinced teetotaler, and even a speaker at temperance meetings.

Then came the inevitable breach with the life mapped out for him ; on the one hand the business of a wine merchant had become impossible to him, and on the other hand his Sunday School work had gradually developed a strong desire to enter the ministry ; and so we encounter the first but not the last occasion on which Brooke Herford followed the line of inward compulsion against that of apparently constraining necessity from without. 'Told my father in one of his visits to Manchester, that I could not continue permanently in the wine trade—and asked him to let me

prepare for the ministry. He was very grieved. Told me he had never seen the least sign of grace for that (which was sadly true). If I wished to be a chimney-sweep or an actor, he would help me—but he pooh-poohed the college and the ministry altogether.’ This was in 1847.

Nothing daunted, however, Brooke without any violent breach or revolution, continued his work at the counting-house, and studied classics and mathematics morning and evening to fit himself for college, though without prejudice to his Sunday School work. The next year contains some momentous entries. There is a note (referring to fuller diaries which have not been preserved) that on February 6th, 1848, occurs the ‘first mention of Miss Hankinson,’ and on April 3rd, ‘Hurrah! Travers Madge has come, there is some hope for me now.’

Hannah Hankinson and Travers Madge! How the apparent accidents of a chance meeting, or a combination of circumstances wholly extraneous to our choice and purpose, seem not only to direct the outer course of our lives, but to determine the stream of our inward energies, and to affect the very tissue of our being!

On the one hand we ask, how would the man’s life have shaped itself, and how much of the Brooke Herford we knew would there have been had these things not happened? But on the other hand, what would have been the significance

of these things themselves had the man not been there for them to mould ?

Of Hannah Hankinson more hereafter. Of Travers Madge (who had come to Manchester to take general direction of the Mosley Street work) he afterwards wrote : ' I remember that in those days he spoke to me as no man had ever spoken to me before ; seemed instinctively to know the struggles and aspirations which often make the beginning of the endeavour to turn to a religious life so hard a time ; and then, telling me freely his own trials and sorrows, before we parted he would kneel down with me in his little room and pray such prayers as I have never heard before or since.'

John Herford had by this time become convinced of the reality of his son's call ; and Brooke on his side was willing to face any privations, and even austerities, that might be needful. One of the strands woven into the saintly character of Travers Madge was a fitful liability to profound religious and social melancholy, which expressed itself in an asceticism that made him grudge himself any kind of indulgence. Brooke Herford's robust and generous nature was essentially alien from any such melancholy, and from any doctrine of self-abnegation for its own sake ; but the same hearty relish for life which enabled him to enjoy material pleasures when they came in his way inspired him with a



far keener passion for the immaterial objects of his desire. Thus he could cast aside all pleasures or indulgences that directly conflicted with his central purposes, or even ran counter to the subsidiary efforts requisite for their accomplishment, with something of the exultation with which a strong man breaks down physical impediments, or feels the play of the elements upon his limbs. The privations which Travers Madge inflicted upon himself because he had no right to anything better, Brooke Herford embraced, because they were the means to an end that he loved, and were therefore loved themselves. So the necessity of severe frugality during his years of preparation, and perhaps all his life, had no terrors for him.

John Herford, wise alike in his initial opposition to what, for ought he knew, might have been the prompting of a restless disposition, and in his final yielding to what he felt to be a settled purpose, 'told me I might enter next session if I could prepare myself.'

William Herford (Brooke's elder brother) was at this time minister at Lancaster, and Brooke went to spend some months with him, studying under his guidance for the entrance examination to the Manchester New College, then located in Manchester. And besides studying he assisted him in out-of-door preaching which he had begun amongst the navvies in some of the villages around

Lancaster. 'I remember at Galgate standing on a rickety chair in the open place of the village, and also at Caton. My first word in *actual preaching* was from that rickety chair at Galgate.'

In September, 1848, he entered Manchester New College, only eighteen years old but with a rich and varied experience already behind him; and he worked so hard and successfully that he was passed on from his first to his third and then from his third to his fifth year.

In 1851 he had taken to preaching regularly at Todmorden, and, as the College authorities could not sanction this arrangement, he withdrew from the College and became the settled minister at Todmorden.

He has left no general record of his student life. What he made of his studies or what he thought of his professors we have to guess; but a number of rhymes, written at college, show the zest with which he entered into the lighter side of the student's life. He had a natural gift of expression, both by pencil and in verse, and though he never made any pretensions to being a poet he could always run his thoughts or humours into easy and pleasant rhyme,—whether the subject was grave or gay. Ranging from college banter to a record of the deepened beauty of all life and nature when he had 'told his love to Hannah,' we find reflections of the varying phases of his outer and inner life in these

verses ;<sup>1</sup> but for a glimpse at his student life proper we must turn to a letter, written not long after he had entered College, to his brother :—

‘ Dear William,

‘ I have delayed writing to you for a few days longer than agreed for two reasons—first because I had an examination on Thursday and wanted to be able to report progress of it, and secondly because I wanted to try for at least a week a new plan of getting up early, before I boasted too much of it. As to the first it was Mr. Kenrick’s examination in Ancient History, and I think I answered second best, the only one who did better being a second year student who was taking the course. I had not worked hard for it—only reading my notes over, first because I hadn’t much time, and secondly because I think that is all one ought to do if an examination is to be any criterion of the attention paid at class and of the real acquirements.

‘ I expect you will be surprised to hear of my habits as to getting up having undergone a change—one too that I hope will be permanent : I get up at all times from half-past four to five—it is generally a quarter to five ; and I have only

<sup>1</sup> We may note here that his faculty for verse did not desert him in later life. Sometimes he would print and often write Christmas and other greetings. They were always happy and graceful. Two of his hymns, ‘ Lead us, heavenly Father,’ and ‘ God loves the weary ones,’ are deservedly well known.

missed twice since I began a fortnight ago, and those times one was a quarter to six and the other six, so that I'm not very bad. The reason hereof is this. Travers was becoming equally lazy with me, and feeling the necessity of some "thorough reform," agreed to call two factory people regularly every morning, which has to be done at half-past five, and I, finding that moral force, vows, and all that sort of thing were unequal to getting me out of bed, agreed to go with him.

'This is the way. I am down by five minutes past five, immediately I make my fire and light it, and then go out and have a run down to his lodgings, where I walk or run up and down before his door till he comes out, with a long fishing rod with which we wake people by rapping at the windows. We run all the way, about a third of a mile, and then I run home again, getting home by a quarter to six, after a run of rather more than a mile. When I get in I find of course my fire nicely burnt up, I sweep up the hearth, dust the table, put the room tidy, and take off my boots, substituting slippers, and then sit down comfortably. It's glorious. I don't spend much of the time in study. Till seven I have made a rule to devote to writing in my diary, reading the Bible, and thinking, etc., and the time so spent gains me far more than the hour spent in study, even in the article of time, for I find I can work harder while I am at it, and work too more

thoroughly : I cannot now, either, waste my odd time as I used to do, and in every way I find it beneficial : I don't think I shall give it up. I do the same on Sunday mornings, for I don't like to make Sunday a day for lying longer in bed.

'Aunts Maria and Barnes have been sending me a sov: between them!! I'm quite rich. A bill which I paid—board and lodging for four weeks with all the other expenses of that kind, dinners on my own hook and so on,—is about £2. I positively prefer my dry bread and water system now to anything else, and it agrees with me. I've got a bit of a cough just now, so I'm thinking of having my boots mended.

'I am penitent on the subject of spelling, but haven't time to look this letter over, so I dare say you will find errors. . . .

'Believe me ever your affectionate brother,

'Brooke Herford.

'P.S.—I think I shall spend my Christmas holidays at Philip's if he will have me.

'November 23rd, 1848.'

In one vacation we find him camping out in the Lake District, and in another doing missionary work (in the footsteps of Travers Madge) in Penzance and Falmouth.

Here we catch a glimpse of him coming home to a friend's house tired in the evening and receiving what he fancied was an urgent call (though it

turned out not to be so) that set him off there and then on a twenty-five mile tramp by night, in the course of which he 'walked on for hundreds of yards fast asleep, passing one or two milestones quite unconscious,' though he kept a sharp look out for them. He was none the worse for it, naturally, and preached three times, the day or day but one after.

In 1851, as we have seen, Brooke Herford became the regular minister at Todmorden; and under 1852 I find the entry, 'June 22nd of this year Hannah and I married, and after a few days' holiday at "Altofts," a little village near Normanton, came home to our little house at "Mutter-hole" or more correctly "Moulterhall" to live.'

For nearly fifty years after this Mrs. Herford (her husband's senior by some years) stood loyally at his side, sharing his struggles and his triumphs. Both had strong personalities and strong wills, and the perfect harmony, the open and joyous confidence, which made their home so beautiful and so invigorating, was not reached without effort on both sides. Brooke Herford, who always had a tendency to regard his personal experiences as the universal norm, used often to tell those about to marry that they had little notion either of the trials or of the true sources of strength and blessedness that were before them; and that they must not expect the earliest time of their marriage to be the happiest. To him and to his

wife, at any rate, the passage of years brought deepening strength and joy in their relationship, and there was a robustness about the comradeship and co-operation of these two strong personalities, a breezy and open frankness, which showed how their union had developed, not through maiming self-repression, and 'reduction to the highest common measure,' but through the welding force of mutual love, and by their bravely and loyally facing joys and trials till each learned to know and to rely upon the other's strength, and to realise the other's weaknesses not as things to be fretted against or passively and repiningly accepted or conceded, or managed ; but as things to be supplemented with a reverend love, recognised not as trials, but as calls and opportunities for that very fellowship of love in which lies strength and joy.

I shall have a few words to say of their home a little later on, with reference to a period when it was my privilege to know it 'better than reportingly.' Here we will only note that on May 7th, 1853, there is a record, 'a son born to us, William Brooke,' followed in due course by more such entries, till the recurrent phenomenon becomes so normal as to demand no special record. They had nine children, besides one little boy who died at birth ; and they lived to see their children's children.

Brooke Herford often pleaded in excuse of the



limited pecuniary support that he could give to chapels and societies in need, 'I have contributed nine little Unitarians to the cause, and I can't afford much more.' This liberal contribution, happily, proved a more permanent asset to 'the cause' than has sometimes been realised in cases equally promising in appearance.

In 1855 Brooke Herford resigned the pulpit of Todmorden. He always spoke of his ministry there with affection, but I gather that the conditions were too much those of a private chaplaincy to be permanently suited to his gifts and character. He came, however, here as everywhere, into close contact with the working people, and laid the foundations of that direct and simple appeal to the common experiences of life which was his chief strength as a preacher. I have heard him tell how on one occasion he had felt borne away by the enthusiasm of his own utterance in the pulpit, and wondered whether he might have seemed to be ranting; but as he came out, one of his flock, a farmer, laid a broad hand upon his shoulder and said, 'Can't ye clap a bit o' steam int'l it, lad?' He was much startled by the criticism, by which a weaker man would have been cast down. But he felt that somehow there must have been a want of force in his utterance for all its fervent energy. He couldn't clap any more of that sort of steam into it; but after all that kind of thing 'was not plus power, it was only

minus restraint.' Mere eloquence and excitement have no feeding quality. Whether the preacher is in heaven or not, he must always be on earth, if he is to get a real purchase on men, and *move* them. He learned the lesson, and throughout his ministry it was the directness of his preaching and its sustaining quality that constituted its most striking characteristic. And because it sustained, it uplifted. The complaint of the man who had never yet 'heard a sermon that would do him past Wednesday' was less applicable to Brooke Herford's preaching than to most. His hearers were seldom rapt into any heaven where they heard things which it is unlawful for a man to utter, but they generally felt that earth was a better and more heavenly place than we are apt to take it for. What they heard tended directly to sweeten and ennoble life, to purify and exalt the daily affections, and to encourage the daily aspirations. It was not worn out by Wednesday. Though he could speak out very sternly on occasion, his constant aim was rather to encourage effort, which he always believed was there, than to rebuke shortcomings.

While at Todmorden he had received repeated invitations to settle elsewhere, but had never considered any of them. He had no immediate prospect of another pulpit when he resigned, but he soon received an invitation to Sheffield, and

on the first Sunday of 1856 he began his ministry there on a salary of £300 a year, which for some time at least, while his growing family was still comparatively small, must have represented something more like affluence than he had ever known before or was to know for many a year to come.

During his Sheffield ministry he carried on systematic missionary work in the Peak and amongst the Yorkshire villages, and he organised a band of lay preachers for this purpose. It involved many a long tramp on the Sundays, something after the style of the adventure in Cornwall already chronicled; and we can see him swarming up a sign post on a dark winter evening to read the direction, driving many miles to get back to his own evening service, or even making a burglarious attack upon the fastenings of his own windows after a walk of thirty miles in the night. This was all in addition to the work in Sheffield itself that led to the formation of the Uppertorpe congregation, and in addition to the revival of Rotherham. No doubt it was all this work that led to his appointment as Missionary Tutor at the Home Missionary Board (now the Home Missionary College) in 1860; and this again led, in 1862, to the publication of the *Home Mission Tracts*, to which he was compelled 'by the urgent need for good, wholesome tracts in my Salford Mission work with the Home Missionary students.'

These *Home Pages* are too well known to need description: dialogues, stories, and essays, all characterised by the raciness, directness, and simplicity that stamped all Brooke Herford's work. In 1860 and 1861 he also contributed a series of papers to the 'Unitarian Herald,' of which he was one of the promoters and editors, dealing in a vein of keen but genial satire with the weaknesses of our religious organisations and practice. The papers were in the form of letters signed by 'Eutychus.' They made some little stir and roused considerable curiosity in their day, and will repay perusal still. There is a strange persistence in the minor weaknesses of humanity!

Amid all these varied activities his preparations for the pulpit were always systematic and conscientious. Few men were capable of meeting an emergency unprepared with more decisive tact and resource than he, but few men left less to the chance inspirations of the moment; and it was by dint of his systematic ways of work (which he often attributed to his business training, but which were really an essential characteristic of the man himself), that he was enabled to get through such an enormous amount of work.

In 1861 a 'trade outrage'<sup>1</sup> startled and shocked

<sup>1</sup> A case of gunpowder, with a lighted fuse, was flung into the window of a workman's cottage. It exploded and badly burned his wife and an old woman that lodged with them. The latter died in a few days.

Sheffield. It was one of the class of crimes that ultimately led to the Commission of 1867-9, the results of which, as a whole, were unexpectedly favourable to the unions, and ultimately led to their improved legal position. But the outrages themselves were atrocious. Brooke Herford had been in very friendly relations with the unions, freely criticising them but defending the principle of combination; and he had consequently been asked from time to time to speak at meetings organised by them. This gave him a special sense of responsibility, and he at once took the largest hall in Sheffield and announced a lecture on *Trade Outrages : who are responsible for them ?*

‘Some of my friends urged me not to attempt the lecture. They feared that if I spoke out, as they knew I meant to do, I should not be heard, or if heard should only excite a tumult. I never for a moment had any such fear. I knew the Sheffield working men, and working men everywhere, can stand plain speaking, if it is honest and kindly and fearless plain speaking. And the result justified my feeling. Never shall I forget the occasion; the dark winter afternoon; the densely packed room; the mass of upturned faces—amongst them all the bitterest unionists in Sheffield—and the quiet with which they heard me out,—a silence as deep as if I had been preaching in my own chapel. Whether I did any good, I know not; yet I cannot but hope that at least

I strengthened some of those who before had disapproved of all such things, yet never dared to denounce them, to make some active stand against them.'

The address itself is remarkable not only for its fearless directness and its fervour, but for its singularly sagacious and discriminating analysis of the different aspects of trade union activity. As sick clubs, as an industrial intelligence department, as organs of collective bargaining, and as a protection of the weakness of the individual operative by the backing of a powerful organisation, he gives them his hearty approval; but when they commit themselves to restrictions that virtually involve war between the trades themselves, or into unsocial lowering of industrial efficiency, he declares them to be based on principles that have no inherent harmonising and attracting power; and hence the terrorism needed to enforce them and the temptation to inhuman outrage.

Boldness of speech, confidence that a fair hearing can always be had by a fair man, the moral courage needed to inflict 'the wounds of a friend,' and a balanced moral judgment, were all manifested on this occasion; and they were all characteristic. For instance, in 1873 when political passions ran so high in Salford that neither party dared to hold open meetings, Brooke Herford (on his own responsibility, since

no one would take responsibility for him) gave a lecture on disestablishment in Ireland and England to which he not only admitted but urgently invited all opponents. The result was to show that 'even in the worst part of the town, where ignorance and bigotry and violence' were rampant, an appeal to fair play ensured as much quiet as 'barricaded doors.'

Still later, in a very different way, Brooke Herford gave perhaps a still more striking proof of moral courage. There is a foundation, dating from 1750, under the will of Judge Paul Dudley, which provides for the delivery of an annual lecture in the Harvard University against the 'tyranny, usurpations, damnable heresies, etc., etc.,' of the Romish Church. This lectureship, when Brooke Herford was in America, had passed into an occasion for saying smooth and pleasant things about the growth of kindly feeling between the Churches; and on one occasion an eminent Roman Catholic had been asked to deliver the lecture and had accepted the invitation. In 1895, after he had returned to England, Brooke Herford was asked to give the lecture. He had always said that if he was asked to deliver it he should not make it a farce; and he did not. It was his firm conviction not that Roman Catholics are without truth and honour, but that their special attitude towards their own Church necessarily so shifts the centre of gravity of moral questions



to them that their ideas of truth and honour will often differ from those of their fellow citizens and will legitimately interfere with full reliance on their assertions and their conduct. For a man who was known as a champion of liberalism, and one who was himself in friendly personal relations with Catholics it must have been a singularly painful task to push this view home with quiet but relentless firmness. As a matter of fact the lecture roused violent feelings, and the authorities promptly explained that they were not themselves responsible for it.

But we have anticipated, by many years, the progress of events, and we must return to Sheffield and the sixties.

In 1864 occurred the appalling Sheffield flood, caused by the bursting of the Bradfield reservoir, and while Brooke Herford was bearing no small portion of the burden of the administration of the relief that was generously provided for the sufferers, there came an invitation to Strangeways, Manchester. At this time he was possessed with the idea that although a minister ought to live by his ministry, yet a stated salary, raised by pew rents or subscriptions, was not the way in which it should be done. Something more spontaneous and less formal seemed requisite, and he determined that he would enter upon no fresh ministry except on condition that the minister's stipend was provided by the offertory.

This, he felt, takes a man's offering for the maintenance of his house of prayer 'out of the list of his quarterly bills, and restores it to its legitimate place amongst the glad acts of Sunday worship.' This would naturally involve the principle of free sittings. The deputation that waited on him on behalf of the Strangeways people did not think they dared even suggest such a revolution to the congregation. On reflection, however, they did suggest it; and the result was an almost unanimous invitation to Brooke Herford to settle amongst them on that basis. 'It was a hard struggle—I think about the hardest of my life. My Sheffield people were very loving and kind; had just (at Christmas) increased my salary to £400 a year; begged me to stay, besought me with many tears! My wife also failed at heart. It seemed to her a wild scheme to leave a happy certainty, for an untried future, with a people who had not been able to give their minister more than £150 or £170 a year, and who frankly told me that by no *subscription* could they raise me more than £200. But it seemed the course of duty. I believe it was the opening of God's way for me.'

On October 30th he conducted his closing service at Sheffield, 'the Upper Chapel crowded to the doors.' On November 6th we find the following entry: 'I preached my opening sermon at Strangeways. A raw, cold November day. The Churchwarden had got it into his mind that there

would be a crowd to hear me (though I had warned them that there would be nothing of the kind), and so had told the chapel keeper he need not light the stoves ! *There was about half a congregation !* I felt a cold, sick feeling on standing up in the small, long uncleaned, half empty chapel—but God gave me strength and cheer—and I was able to lift the service out of the gloom !’

Brooke Herford had evidently not yet acquired a taste for affluence, and a hard struggle was before him ; but he faced it with a robustness that made it in a sense a triumphal progress. The ‘ Courage and Cheer ’ which he has given to so many, were always his own. For eleven years he continued his work at Strangeways with growing success and satisfaction. The congregation prospered. The proceeds of the offertory far exceeded all expectations ; and the experiment showed at any rate that vigour and cohesion in a congregation do not depend upon the existence of a body of ‘ seat holders.’ It was during this period that I first came to know him. He happened to be staying with the leading member of the Congregation amongst whom I found my first settlement, when I entered the ministry, and I shall never forget the counsel and help he gave me. It was a veritable baptism to spend those few momentous days in constant intercourse with him. Afterwards I settled near Manchester and was in frequent close intercourse with him. He was one

of the two or three men I have met in the course of my life, to whom I cared to go for advice or sympathy when I was in any real perplexity as to the right course of action to pursue. I knew that his counsel would not be tainted by any desire to enlist spiritual considerations on the side to which worldly wisdom already pointed, and that at the same time he would have a perfectly clear insight into the practical bearings of the case, and would encourage no flighty and impulsive action that did not count the costs. For it is well to note, in special connection with his great act of renunciation in going to Strangeways, that no man ever faced the business side of the ministerial life more frankly than did Brooke Herford. His communications on the subject to the various congregations with which he was connected are perfect models of manly directness. There is no implicit apology for considering material facts, and he declares that he considers no spiritual relation can be wholesome if it rests upon a shaky business foundation.

As a counsellor he was always ready to give a patient hearing, and would very likely have a pronounced opinion. He was confident in his own judgment on all subjects, intellectual as well as moral ; for he was confident in eternal principles and his directness of vision made him feel very sure that he was basing his judgments upon them. This confidence, of course, had its weak side, as

he himself was fully aware. 'I am so dead certain of things,' he once said, 'that I can hardly understand anyone else doubting them; and if I say what I think to anyone, unless he knocks my teeth down my throat on the spot, I go about telling everyone that he perfectly agrees with me.' But if such a description gives the impression of intolerance or hectoring, nothing could be less true. The breadth of his affection, more than compensated for any tendency to intellectual narrowness, as was indeed illustrated in my own case. We differed on many matters then held to be important, and he would pour humorous but very sincere contempt upon the Biblical criticism to which I was devoted, but in spite of this and in spite of the wide difference of years<sup>1</sup> and position which stood between us, he always treated me with a brotherly confidence and affection that a man can seldom hope to experience save from his own contemporaries and those with whom he is in fullest intellectual agreement. I may note in this connection his invitation to Moncure Conway to occupy his pulpit; and his friendship with John Jacob

<sup>1</sup> Indeed difference of years never affected him much. He won the hearts of children by treating them with courtesy. Young men and women loved him like a brother. He could of course address 'children' and have a word of counsel for 'young men'; but a person was in the first place a person to him, respected and loved as such; and was a child or an old man, a young man or a maiden, individually, not by way of belonging to a class.

Holyoake, whom he had come to respect when publicly opposing him in the matter of 'Secularism.' The story of Holyoake's first meal in his house is too good to omit. Brooke Herford had asked him home (as men do) without thinking how he was to be entertained. 'But, Brooke,' said his wife, 'we've nothing to give him!' 'Oh yes! we haven't finished that pot of marmalade.' 'But,—I'm keeping that for W——.' 'Oh! but Holyoake hasn't the consolations of Christianity—give him the marmalade!'

It was during his Manchester ministry that a friend told him that every house had a characteristic smell, and Mrs. Herford's 'smelt of soap and water.' So it did. The stuffiness of upholstery was conspicuously absent. In their severe frugality the Herfords had nothing about them to gather dust, nothing that could not be reached by soap and water. There was a clean, wholesome atmosphere, physical, spiritual, and moral, in their home, more invigorating than mountain air; and withal there was a sense of wealth, wealth of energy and love and keen life; and there was generous hospitality too, for the ends were made to meet, not by scrimping, but by simplicity. There was always a bed and always a meal to be had, and there was always abundance of the real best. What you had there was genuine food both for mind and body. In the expressive phrase of a Yorkshire friend,



‘It’s bread; you can eat it; it doesn’t stick to your teeth.’ One may notice in this connection the luminous remark of the packer who moved them from Sheffield to Manchester that he had ‘never had a job with as many beds and no best china.’

But the strain was heavy and continuous. In May, 1868, ‘My old friend, John Harland, F.S.A., died. He left his greatest work, the new edition of *Baines’ History of Lancashire* unfinished; the first volume just completed, the second not yet begun. The publishers begged me to undertake its completion—so did Mrs. Harland; and I did so. It occupied me the rest of 1868 and most of 1869.’ It was indeed a most formidable undertaking. Anyone who looks at the volume will be amazed to think of such a task being accomplished in the time a busy man could spare from engagements already sufficiently engrossing; and we are not surprised to find the entry under the year 1870, ‘In the latter part of this year, I broke down in health—threatenings of brain trouble.’ The same page contains the entry, ‘——— sent me a cheque for £50 to enable me to go to the Mediterranean! One of the tenderest acts of friendship I ever received, and so kindly and generously done!’

It was during these years at Manchester that Mrs. Herford once quietly remarked that she hoped we should not rise until the judgment day,



‘ she should so like to be sure of a good rest.’ Long afterwards when I quoted the saying to her, she seemed surprised and said, ‘ I must have been tired that day.’ No doubt she was ; and he too ; on that and on many other days ; but that was not exactly the impression the remark made at the time. It was rather that she was tasting so many good things incompatible with rest, that she wanted to taste that too. For both she and her husband had amongst their other graces, a great capacity for enjoyment. Brooke Herford enjoyed his professional work, and he enjoyed such tasks as were involved in his antiquarian work on the History ; for he had always had keen intellectual interests outside his stated work. In Sheffield and in Manchester, and afterwards in Chicago and Boston, he was a member of literary and philosophical clubs (including the well known ‘ Thursday Evening Club ’ in the last named place) in which he found much refreshment ; and he was a good man with his hands, too. We find him doing a day’s work at brick-laying when a grate had to be reset, and pronouncing it a good job at the end, as no doubt it was ; and his carpenter’s bench did something to keep him, like many another overworked man, in good and wholesome spirits. He could enjoy a holiday, too, with complete abandonment and even boyish frolicsomeness. He used to say that he liked to take a little work with him

on a holiday so that he might have the extra pleasure of neglecting it. He divided a holiday, he said, into two parts. In the first he did nothing that he didn't like, and in the second he did nothing at all.

But there was no doubt that the wheels of the chariot were beginning to drag. Various expedients were tried to lighten the strain ; amongst them a systematic pulpit exchange, alternately in the morning and evening, every Sunday for many months, with a brother minister in the neighbourhood. But, not unnaturally, this arrangement gave the said brother's people more satisfaction than it gave his own, and he had to admit that he had not found, in this scheme, a general solution of the difficulty of continuous sermon production.

At last, in 1875, he got a long leave of absence and visited Chicago for some months ; and on his return he accepted an invitation for a permanent settlement there. He left his people with unfeigned regret and with heartfelt thanks for their loyalty, but with a perfectly frank statement that the necessity of supplementing his ministerial salary from other sources had prevented the possibility of anything that he could regard as adequate study, and had put a strain upon his powers, for which he felt bound to seek relief, when the opportunity came, coupled with enlarged prospects of effective service.

The free seat and offertory principle was no longer a matter of conscience with him. He was still attached to it, but he had come to see that nothing is everything; and perhaps he perceived that no outward change of organisation really strikes at the root of things, and that after an apparent revolution the essential working of an institution, with its merits and its defects, may go on in much the same way as it did before. But it cannot be denied that there was a somewhat bitter irony in the fate that took him at last (in Boston) into the heart of a mercantile system of pew holding and pew sub-letting which presented a rigid and unyielding front to which no conservative prejudice in the old country could ever furnish a parallel.

His life in Chicago was by no means free from struggle and disappointment; but he seemed to rise with extraordinary rapidity into a position of influence and command, greater than he had ever attained in England. America has more than once anticipated the full verdict of England on her own sons. He had wide influence in Chicago outside his own Church, and succeeded before he left in establishing an almost universal custom of early closing for a Saturday half-holiday; while his position as a leader amongst the Unitarians was soon assured.

In 1881 he received an invitation to take charge of the first Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts,

which would have brought him into close connection with the University life of Harvard. He regarded it as perhaps the greatest honour of his life ; but he did not see his way to accepting it. The next year, however, he received and accepted a call to the Arlington Street Church in Boston.

And now, at last, his outward struggles were over. During the ten years of his ministry at Arlington Street influence and honours increased upon him. He was one of the leaders in establishing a great Loan Building Fund, in 1884, in connection with the National Unitarian Conference. In the same year he helped to open the King's Chapel in Boston for central mid-week services ; and he threw open his own Church for vesper services on Sunday afternoons. One service a day was the general rule in Boston. But this did not satisfy Mr. Herford, and he determined to try vesper services from four to five. He gave most careful attention to the arrangement of the music, making it organic and connected, not a mere miscellaneous concert ; and there were responses, lessons, and prayer, as well as a 'ten minutes' sermon. The result was startling. Arlington Street Church looks upon the Public Gardens. Young men and women, hardworking people taking their Sunday rest, streamed into the church, gathering before the doors were opened at the sound of the bell. Sunday after Sunday, from eight hundred to twelve hundred worshippers

filled the church. Few of them ever made themselves known to the minister; but the services were not meant to 'strengthen the Church,' but to feed the people; and they did it.

In 1891 he was appointed preacher to Harvard University: 'he considered it a great honour to be chosen preacher; and such an influence over and intercourse with young men was invaluable.' It was in the summer of this year that he received his degree of D.D. from the University; and he began a series of Friday evening services in his church, conducted by ministers of all denominations, and then helped to establish Good Friday services jointly conducted by clergy of all denominations in a great orthodox church, Phillips Brooks taking his place amongst the rest.

And together with influence and ease there came opportunities for leisure and for study. He lived a considerable part of the year out in the country at Wayland, and it is amusing to find notes indicating that he planned out his work in the garden with the same preciseness with which he planned out his services or his work for his Sunday classes. Systematic as he was, no man was freer from red tape. His system served him, never enslaved him. He could always meet sudden demands. He always seemed to be able, not only to command time, but to bring leisure of mind and heart to place at the service of friends that needed it. The caterpillars, it is true,

were to be picked off the gooseberry bushes during such an hour of the day—if a friend had dropped in, the caterpillars would have waited, but they would have been picked off all the same.

Some years earlier he had told me that he thought he had learned the lessons of poverty, and if Providence thought fit now to try him with the temptations of prosperity, he felt that it might conduce to the perfection of his Christian character. Well, Providence had taken the same view, and Brooke Herford triumphantly met this harder set of temptations also !

From this almost ideal life he was summoned in 1892 to Hampstead. He came back to another spell of strenuous work in the Old Country, and we found him the same man that had left us, but mellowed and deepened ; with the prestige of his American ministry, and supported by the maturity of his own character and powers. His work for the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, the income of which he doubled, is fresh in all our minds, and his work at Hampstead was, for years, that of a man in the full vigour of life. But at last we began to feel that all that he had crowded into his span of years was telling upon his physical frame, robust as it was.

As the century grew old both Mr. and Mrs. Herford seemed to be failing, and at last, in April of 1901, Mrs. Herford died. Mr. Herford's work had been interrupted by illness, and it had



long been a problem with him whether he could look to continue it much longer. The question was now decided. He sent in his resignation in May to take effect in June.

Some of his English and American admirers presented him with a testimonial of something over £3,000 shortly after his resignation, a welcome relief to any anxieties he may have had on the score of the provision for his old age and for his family, and a welcome testimony to the value of the work for which he had lived and which he could now no longer do.

In the December of the same year he fell into his last illness, and after two years of weakness, with long lapses into unconsciousness, quietly breathed his last on December 20th, 1903.

But a biographical sketch ought not to end with death. It seems to misrepresent the proportions and relations of things. It is of the life of the man, not of his death, that we are thinking.

And this man drank in life at every pore. He knew what he most cared to have, to do, and to be, and went straight for it. As every crisis of life came to him he chose on those principles on which he would afterwards wish to have chosen, never letting the moment triumph over the hour, or the hour over the drift and purpose of a lifetime. And so the tragedy of life's mistaken choices—of leaving the substance for the shadow, of vain illusions that make us choose according to the



surface stream, neglecting the deep currents of our being, that delude us into taking this one path that we may spend our lives in weeping that we took not the other—never cast its shadow over the radiance of his inward conviction or the strength with which he handled life.

Generous, open-handed, and open-hearted, with a noble simplicity and a noble frugality, he was able to share with those around him, nay, with the merest stranger, those simple supports and adornments of life which were all he cared to have—all, at least, that he cared to win—and his whole housekeeping and home-building were a proclamation of his faith that material things are to be valued only for the life of the affections, of the mind, and of the spirit to which they can be made to minister. His choice throughout was for the things that are real and abiding, and he cared not what came of the shows and conventional requirements of life. He knew what life was. He chose it, and he lived. Hence his power as a preacher and teacher. He did not commend to his flock as precious, things which he was himself content to barter for dross. His joy of the spirit, his secure sense of power to point out the pearls of great price for which man should sell all that he hath, had upon them the stamp of vital sincerity. He testified of what he knew. Hence, too, the invigorating quality of all intercourse with him. Few men, in word and deed, held up so high a

standard with more convincing force, with more infectious enthusiasm, and with less of direct or implied rebuke. He was, in the best sense, a man of the world ; a man that knew what the world is, and what men are ; and those who heard him felt that he knew the nature of things, and that what he demanded they ought to give. It was just because he was a man of the world that his 'unworldliness' was so impressive, his sentiment so vital, his kindly humour so penetrating. 'A preacher who is a poet and a man of business' was the verdict of a singularly shrewd observer.

And, after all, the world has a strange respect for those who will not fawn upon it ; and it gives them of its best. And so the world brought its tribute at last to this man who would not sue for its favour ; and after a long struggle, days of comparative ease and abundant honour came to him.

Always eager in his intellectual life, he was conscious that he had never done systematic justice to his powers ; he was aware of a certain raggedness and patchwork quality about his scholarly and intellectual equipment, and he longed to be able to take a systematic survey of certain fields, especially of theological study ; to start again, as one might in one's youth, and lay sure and fast and evenly the foundations of a more systematic student life. The opportunity had come, but there came also an invitation to re-

linquish it. The prospect of work triumphed over the prospect of leisure, and he determined to come back and plunge himself again into the incessant toil of organising, stimulating, forming and carrying out this scheme and that; and in so choosing he obeyed, I take it, the yearning of his heart—which he had been too brave to humour, but which he could not resist when there was a clear and honourable opportunity to indulge it—the yearning of his heart for home.

Throughout his life Brooke Herford was an optimist. In his youth, confidently and somewhat impatiently looking for the kingdom of God on earth, he was fond of quoting one who, when exhorted to trust in the Lord, answered, ‘Yes, but the worst of it is, the Lord isn’t in a hurry. Now I am.’ In later years he would never admit any disappointment, only he was willing to wait the Lord’s time. With the humorous self-criticism which never failed him, looking back on the self-confidence of former years, he declared that he had now begun to think that after all he was not responsible for running the universe, and was inclined to give Providence a chance. But he was still an optimist. I think he was conscious of no re-action in social and moral affairs, deeply as he was sometimes shocked by particular events; and the tendencies of thought had long seemed to him to flow towards a deepening harmony between heart and head. Indeed,

the supposed conflict between religion and science had never troubled him much. He never would have it that there was any serious drift in scientific thought that threatened the fundamental matters of faith. They were beyond the reach of intellectual bewilderment to him. He would indeed try his hand from time to time, like another, at the intellectual exposition of the fundamentals of his faith, or refutation of intellectual attacks upon them, but the true reconciliation of knowledge and faith to him lay in the unity of his own life.

His piety always had a childlike simplicity and directness about it, on which philosophical subtleties could never really get a bite; and for the like reason his devoutness was never a plant that needed a sheltered atmosphere, and the protection of hallowed associations. It was a primal emotion, robust and rejoicing in the open air. It could live and reveal itself unembarrassed in the press of social or even political life. His aspirations and his devotion could express themselves in the midst of merriment as well as sorrow. They required no preface or skilfully constructed transitions, but rose spontaneously in the midst of breezy laughter as easily as in the solemn moments of what we others call the deeper life. The deeps are never far even from the surface of a true life.

P. H. W.

## SERMONS



# I

## ANCHORS OF THE SOUL.

*'Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.'* (Acts, xxvii. 29.)

~~THERE~~ is the crisis of that great story of Paul's voyage and shipwreck. Holding by their anchors and wishing for the day. All through the dark night, hearing the great waves break with a dull, hard roar upon the unknown coast, and feeling the blow of heavy seas upon the vessel's side, and counting the slow hours, and wondering if possibly those anchors would hold till daylight!

There is always for me a suggestion of the great strain that sometimes comes on human life, and of this subject—the 'Anchors of the Soul.' The old words set one thinking how there are other storms in life, tempests through which 'neither sun nor stars appear,'—and other wrecks in life besides those which strew the sands with broken spars and wasted treasures—times when the soul can only hold fast by what anchors it has and wait for the day, and well for it if it can



hold on till the day comes! So the old words become a parable—it is always real things that make the best parables—a parable first of the soul in life's fiercest storms and strains, and secondly, of the anchors by which it may hold.

And I want you to mark this, that it is the holding fast of the soul that really matters most, even in what we are apt to think of as mere bodily dangers. To Paul watching there, the long night through, with death howling in the wind and roaring in the waves, it mattered far more that the anchors of his soul hold firmly, so as to keep him quiet and firm and self-possessed, than that those four anchors keep the vessel from drifting on the rocks. It is the greatest triumph in the world, in times of bodily danger, when men can keep calm, ~~not get flurried and lose their heads,~~ and begin shrieking out that kind of prayer that means distrust. For, have you ever thought of it?—~~it is quite a mistake to suppose that prayer necessarily means trust. There is a kind of aimless shrieking of prayer that comes of distrust, that is a mere frantic clutching at the skirts of God for help, and that would just as soon catch at the skirt of the devil, if he were at hand. The only prayer that is worth much, is that which is like the hand of the little child, placed 'in the Father's hand, "touching His right hand in the darkness,"' and drawing a little closer to Him, and so waiting. That is the grand triumph,—~~

even if nothing can be done but to die,—to die, quietly, orderly, helping one another, cheering one another, looking quietly up and on—that is something like what Paul had in his mind, when he said ‘We are more than conquerors.’

And so in all other straits and strains, as you go more inward, into life’s own experience—it is still the same thing that matters—the holding fast of the soul.

(There is the strain of intense busy-ness. Sometimes you feel worked up to the very last point. Care upon care has come upon you, labour after labour, each something that must be done if you can ‘do’ at all—this, and that, and the other, and endless worries still beyond;—and perhaps they are all pressing to be attended to at the same time, and your brow is aching, and your mind is in a whirl, and your heart is utterly weary of it; and you can see no end, no bright, sweet dawn, no quiet haven where you may bring your tasks to land and rest on grassy slopes beside the troubled sea—but only waves, and rocks, and utter collapse if you let go a moment! Don’t you know that experience? and have you never felt tempted to let go—to drop the whole thing, to make no more effort, to fold your hands and let things take their course and go to ruin if they will?)

(And there is the storm of trouble. Sometimes, trouble upon trouble comes upon life, making life shiver and tremble like mighty waves striking

upon a ship, till the heart feels as if it must give way utterly. I take it that was what the old poet meant to depict in that story of Job—messenger after messenger of woe coming to him—first that his oxen and asses had been run away with in a raid by the Sabeans; and then that lightning had burned up his sheep-pens with all the sheep in them; and then that the Chaldeans had driven off all his camels; and then, last and most crushing blow, that all his children had been killed by the house being blown down upon them. And yet not 'last!' What a touch that is of that other trouble coming yet, on the top of the rest—his being 'smitten with sore boils from head to foot'—a small matter comparatively, and yet so hard just when he was so crushed and wanted all his health and strength 'to hold fast in his integrity.' Is not that like life? Sometimes the fierce strain of pain; sometimes, ~~loss upon loss~~, ruin of all worldly fortune and prospects! Sometimes bereavement, overwhelming the life in utter desolation! Oh, what anchors can hold the soul patient and true, to go, by and by, upon its course again?

(And the fiercest strain of all, I think, is that of temptation. Sometimes a life is driven by its desperate want or by its fierce passions right on the very rock of some great sin. You see that, every day, just in the likeness of the parable: fair lives that to the world look strong and seaworthy, all suddenly wrecked on some dire rock

~~of sin!~~ Utterly wrecked and lost! But is that all the story? Before that final wreck, ~~always~~ *the end is* as it is told here: the being driven ~~by~~ want or passion; urged on; the skies growing darker; losing sight of all heavenly lights by which, before, the life was steering; ~~and then~~ the sense of coming danger, ~~the dreadful sense of life drifting towards a great crash, nearer and nearer to what will be the very wreck of all things!~~ And then the despairing effort, the putting out of the very last anchors of the soul, trying just to hold clear of wreck until the deep darkness and helplessness shall have lifted. Ah, how many there always are who are just holding on at the last strain, ~~and how many more who know not how soon they may be so?~~

And so it is that ~~we~~ *we* need to have with us as we sail these changing seas of life, strong anchors, ~~anchors of thought, of motive, of deep, immovable conviction and faith that may reach down to the very foundation of things, to that which is to the very rock of everlasting fact and being which abides beneath the strain and storm!~~ Paul's 'shipmen,' as the old translator calls them, had four anchors, ~~and I suppose the proper thing would be to work out just one of these deep motives or convictions. And I dare say it could be done, or five, or six, if it came to that—for the ties which the soul can establish with the deep foundation of the moral universe are very various,~~

and men no more carry the same number of anchors than ships do. But there are three, that ~~it seems to me all may have, and all should have,~~ and which are the very strongest of all. First, among these anchors of the soul to keep it firm in all the strain of life, I hold love—simply human love. I do not say it is the strongest, or grips the deepest, but it is mostly about the first that holds. It does not matter what the strain is—danger, or pain, or toil, or sin—if you only love some one very dearly, enough to lift you out of thinking of yourself, ~~what an anchor it is,~~ how it helps you to hold on! It matters not who it is—wife or child, brother or sister, perhaps one who is no kin to you, except that kinship of being in the same suffering with you and finding it a little harder than you do. One of the grandest recipes for getting over fear, is love. When there is a shipwreck, it is not those whose first thought is of some dear one whom they long to save, who fall into panic and begin wringing their hands or rushing wildly about. Love lends calmness, as well as strength. So there is no way of forgetting one's <sup>own</sup> pain, like thinking of some one else's pain. When Sir Philip Sydney, after the battle of Zutphen, lay dying in the sun with that fearful parching thirst upon him, he would not drink the water they brought him till they had first taken it to a poor soldier lying near. No fear of shipwreck in any stress of pain, for a soul like that.

And what is it that keeps many a poor fellow, *at* at the last gasp with work, just sick and dizzy with it, and feeling as if he could not go on,—what is it helps him to hold on? Just the thought of the dear ones at home.

And so in the fierce strain of temptation. *Oh,* Oh, if ever you do come near some great sin—and *we* there are terrible abysses and whirlpools, *often,* often, very near to ~~very~~ noble lives—*let us* put out that anchor of love! Think of those dear ones, whose lives are twined about with *we* yours! *we* You might face your own shame, but could you face theirs? *we* Could you bear that awful sorrow of their finding out that you are not what they have lovingly *we* thought you? Hold by that strong cable of love! *we* Feel at it, tighten it—and the more you do so, the firmer it will hold, and if only you hold on, the darkness will clear off and the blessed daylight will come.

A second wonderful anchor for the life of man in its times of strain and trial, is, the simple sense of righteousness, or rather rightness,—the clear sense of something being right, and holding on to that. I think that is what the old Hebrew poet had in his mind when, ~~after describing Job's troubles,~~ he said: 'In all this Job sustained his integrity.' ~~I think~~ there is a feeling, that, deep down beneath what things looks like, ~~deep down~~ beneath all considerations of whether they are painful or pleasant—the ~~bottommost~~ question



is, whether they are right, and, what is right—  
~~and that this is the thing that reaches deepest~~  
~~of all.~~ When you reach that, 'what is right,'  
 you are down on the very foundations of the  
 Universe! I think that often, when it is all dark  
 above, 'no sun nor stars appearing,' nothing to  
 shape one's course by, and danger and sorrow,  
 whichever way you turn, the one great anchor-  
 age of life is in the sense of a thing being right,  
 and in holding simply to that. I often think that  
 this must have been what enabled those old  
 martyrs to hold fast to the very end! Torture  
 was waiting for them, death by cruel agonies—  
 agonies that it is impossible to conceive of one's  
 being really able to endure. And sometimes love,  
 instead of being an additional anchor was one of  
 the things that tried to drag them from their  
 anchorage—wife or lover clinging piteously to  
 them and beseeching them to say the word that  
 would set them free! But I think they felt they  
 had simply to do the right—that the one thing  
 not to be done, was, to lie, or betray their faith,  
 and, that, though they could not measure them-  
 selves against that terrible agony, or see to the  
 end of it, if they should hold to the right from  
 moment to moment, God would help them through.)

First, love; secondly, the moral reality, the  
 right of things. There is yet one other great  
 anchor and hold for man in the storms and stress  
 of life—viz.—the sense of spiritual realities, of



the realness of the spiritual side of the universe—of the immortal soul, and of the eternal God. For the two things—the soul, and God, go together, fit together—though sometimes it is the one and sometimes the other that seems most vivid and real, and supplies the strongest motive power. And here it is that the great words and Gospel of Christ come to our help. At times our own consciousness of our souls, and of God, is so vivid and real that we need nothing else—need no revelation, no assurance from any other. Said Mr. Lloyd Garrison, at the funeral service for Theodore Parker: ‘I believe in the immortal life not as a matter of logic and metaphysics, for it does not come within the scope of these, but I feel it in every nerve and fibre of my system, in every drop of my blood, in the very instinct and desire of my nature.’ It is a grand thing to have such a realizing consciousness—but how few can have that in themselves alone, and even those who do, will have weaker hours when those things that sometimes seem so intensely, vividly real, seem vague and shadowy, and the heart hardly knows whether it has not been believing in beautiful dreams, nor whether it does really believe in them. There comes in that marvellous light and power of Christ, making things clear and certain, which to our own thinking and questioning alone, sometimes seem so dim, lighting up our faith with his divine certainty of One who verily

~~saw~~. 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body ; after that there is no more that they can do !' No more ? Why, what more could there be to be done is the question which in some moods is apt to flash to the mind. But as ~~he~~ says the words, the whole situation seems coloured with a new and stronger meaning. It is the soul that is the real abiding thing ;—and he who has come to feel the reality of the soul, to live in the soul, feels what hold there is in that thought.

'The soul secure in her existence, smiles  
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.'

Yes, ~~and~~ not only for danger. I think ~~that~~ sense of the soul's life, as something that cannot die, is, ~~when you realize it~~, a still greater help in the strain of temptation. One of the most touching confidences I was ever privileged to share, was that of a man who had passed through a long and severe struggle with sin. He had watched and prayed and striven, and sometimes he had kept right, and sometimes he had fallen—~~fallen~~ sometimes so utterly that at last he was in deep despair. ~~In that despair~~ he longed to be out of life. He prayed for death, courted it, went into all manner of risk and danger hoping to meet it. ~~Then~~ one day, there came like a voice speaking in his heart, this thought : 'It is of no use ; death would not mend the matter ; you could live on, somewhere else, and ~~wherever that~~

~~somewhere else is, you would be the same, and you would have to take up the struggle just where you leave it off,—and only weakened and worsened by having run away from it.~~

And that helped him,—~~not any terror of hell, but~~ just the feeling of the soul going to live on! And holding fast by that, and waiting for day, the darkness by and by passed away, and the light came, ~~not the light of having finally overcome sin, but that light with which Christ's whole Gospel is glowing—~~of the infinite, patient love of God.

Yes, ~~for,~~ in every way, the most beautiful, tender, self-forgetful strength comes when any mere thought of self—even of the immortal, ~~soul-~~self, is merged in that larger sense Christ gives us of the enfolding, all-possessing life of God. That seems to include and glorify all the other strengths which hold our life.

There is the true anchor! Sometimes almost the only one. There are times when love fails us; times when the sense of right does not come in. In the great desolation of sorrow, ~~I think~~ simple faith in God is almost the only anchor. When some great love is gone from us, ~~when some very tender tie of life is torn away,~~ it seems small comfort to us that right is right. We do not want consoling words, even, at first; Job's friends were true, wise friends, sitting silent with him there seven days without ever a word, 'for they saw that his grief was very great.' But then, as the

soul sits in the silence and the darkness, if there has been any earnest Christian faith, and if there is any effort to feel rightly,—there comes the sense of the great mighty Providence enfolding all,—the sense of God ; and if the soul will rest in that, not clamouring passionate prayers for what may not be, but just lying back as it were in the everlasting arms—then, little by little, the great violence of the storm passes, the horror of great darkness lifts, and a quiet shining of divine tenderness comes upon the almost shipwrecked life :

‘ When I am feeble as a child,  
And flesh and heart give way,  
Then on thy everlasting strength  
With passive trust I stay ;  
And the rough wind becomes a song  
And darkness shines like day ! ’

Dear friends, take these thoughts about this voyage we all are making across these unknown seas of life. To-day, we rest a little, like Paul and his friends when the south-wind blew softly ; and our faces are fanned by the gentle breath of prayer, and the light of God rests upon our hearts. But to-morrow we must press on again ;—and who can tell how soon the storm may rise, the strain may come, and we be holding by our anchors and wishing for the day.

God help us in that hour, that our anchors may hold till the blessed light comes !

## II.

### THE GATE BEAUTIFUL.

*'At the Gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful.'* (Acts iii. 2.)

KING HEROD did a more significant thing than he knew, when, in rebuilding the old Jewish Temple, he adorned one of its approaches with such lavish ornamentation that it got the name of the 'Gate Beautiful.' He had no high meaning in it. It was little he cared either for God or Temple. All he thought of was of gratifying the love of show which his Roman education had grafted on his half Bedouin nature. What the Jews thought of it does not appear. Probably the stricter Jews frowned upon it just as the old school believers frowned, when the modern descendants of the Puritans first began to replace the homely meeting-house by the Gothic church. Perhaps, however, they consoled themselves with thinking that it was better for people to go into the Temple by a beautiful gate than not to go

in at all ; and they were hardly human if, in time, they did not begin to take a certain pride in the gaping admiration of foreign visitors and country pilgrims. Anyway there the porch stood, with its rows of rich Corinthian pillars, glistening with costly marbles and burnished gold. And to the dwellers in Jerusalem it was just the beautiful gate of their temple ; but to the world it has been something more. It has been a suggestive image or parable. The architectural fact has fastened men's thought upon a spiritual fact. The great temple of the universe has a ' gate beautiful.' Beauty is one of the things which open from the visible phenomena of nature to a higher meaning which is invisible. The beautiful is one of the doorways to the higher life. It offers the mind refreshment and rest ; it invites the heart to worship ; and it leads in to the holy of holies of Communion with God.

It is this larger, mystic ' Gate Beautiful ' which is my subject. I want to speak of this subtle, wonderful element of beauty, that God has woven among the varied qualities of things ; and of its use, in civilizing, elevating, spiritualizing ; and especially—perhaps the most needful thing to speak of in this day, of how beauty is,—the gate, not the Temple, that its use does not end with itself ; that we are not to rest in mere admiration of it, but use it as a gate, look beyond it, pass in through it, to that temple of higher

feeling and life, to which beauty is, after all, only one of the porches.

There are a hundred ways in which I might speak of this element of the beautiful. For it is no 'straight or narrow gate,' like some of the upward ways! It is built in no single spot of earth. It is not in some far off lonely place, accessible only to the seekers for the picturesque; nor in any single aspect of the world or of humanity, only visible to exceptionally gifted souls. The Gate of Beauty, like the Gate of Sleep, may be found anywhere. If you only fulfil God's condition of honest labour, you may close your eyes anywhere and you find the gate of sleep. And so, you have hardly got to do more than open your eyes—really open them, anywhere—and anywhere you may find the gate beautiful, with sweet glimpses of high thought and a holy presence opening beyond it! There is not a spot of earth, not a realm of even humblest life or action, that has not, or at least may not have—interfused with it, this element of Beauty; and always it is there, opening the way to something better than itself. Why, even in such commonplace matters as food and dress, there is all the difference in the world between the mere supplying of nature's need, and the supplying that need in ways touched by grace and beauty. When you are ill in bed, and a little doubtful—as one is apt to be at such times—about the moral



government of the world, you will be more inclined to believe in a good providence if your breakfast is brought up on a neat little tray, all bright and white, with perhaps a freshly gathered flower beside the tea-cup, than if the same food is served all slovenly and untidy. I should have more heart to be chaplain in a hospital where the Flower Mission brought some glimpses of sweet flowers week by week than in one where there was only food and medicine, even though these should be just as good. I think the poor sick folk might be more inclined to go in—just through that gate—to prayer and thanksgiving. And as for dress :—Why, care for beauty in dress is one of the most marked steps towards civilization and higher humanity. It is a stage of progress ! What does it mean to see the world all dressed up in its best on Sundays and holidays ? Is it only an outward change ? Does it not help people to self-respect ? Do not even your little children feel a new sense of moral responsibility when they are in their best clothes ? Only—as I said—take care that it be not the Temple, only the gateway ! And so with beauty of architecture. Does it mean nothing but a vain display of bricks and mortar when the dreary lines of bricks in some new, growing city, begin to give way to stately piles, and noble public buildings ? I know that that is not all, or the chief thing to be done in our great cities. Still, take the fashion for architectural beauty for

what it is worth—and it is a gate beautiful—one of the ways towards a nobler civilization.

And beauty of behaviour :—What a nameless charm there is in courteous and gracious manners—all that makes the true gentleman—or, finer word still—‘gentlewoman.’ And beauty of speech—the winged words that weave their eloquent flight about a thought, and bear it up on high—and that are most beautiful when they carry you up with the thought, and not merely leave you spell-bound, gazing at the rhetoric ! And beauty of sound—the strains of rich, delicious melody—

‘ Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes ’—

And the wonderful monotonous of Nature—rising and falling with weird Aeolian cadences, in the waves and the winds, and the hum of happy insects that have their being under the shadow of the summer leaves ! Something more than sound in it all, more than mere mechanical proportion in vibrations—something that touches the heart with that nameless sense of beauty and opens the door to a vague, mystic, wonderful beyond and within !

But, above all, I must not forget to speak of that in which the Gate Beautiful stands widest open, all around us, in these lengthening days of spring. Two things touch me with a peculiar power—more every year as I grow older, the

touch of a little child's hand, and the beauty of the fresh green of the spring. I think the beauty of the earth's new life, the tender green of the young leaves, the first simple flowers that greet us by the way-side, do seem more beautiful every year as we get into the strain and care of life or towards the fading strength of age. And it is so universal! Something of it everywhere. 'There is a pleasure in the pathless woods.' Yes! but if you have eyes for it there is a pleasure also in every patch of grass—so fresh and green just now—in our city streets and squares. And the trees—with the young, translucent foliage on them! Soon it will all be darkened into the summer green, and grimed with dust—but just now it is all so beautiful, passing words to tell!

All this is the Gate Beautiful, which the Lord has set up everywhere, or made possible for man to set up everywhere. The Universe is a great temple, not made with hands, in which dwells His mighty life. These outward things are just the veil, which, taking form and movement from the life within, suggests that glory which none might look upon and live.

Of course it might be said—how do we know that there is any such glory behind, that there is anything within? This is not a discourse of argument, to-day, but I may just put it to you in passing—that there is something very significant in this very fact—that as soon as we pass

beyond the merest perception of outward things, to comparing them, and thinking about their relation to each other and to us, we find ourselves irresistibly impelled to thoughts which imply not the mere objects, but thought, purpose, life behind them. I may not think much, philosophically, of the Design Argument, but as I take up a little flower, I cannot help feeling—‘something meant that!’

And it is such a kind, beautiful meaning, bringing the sense of a mercifulness in the great whole of things! A friend told me of his standing one day by the side of a professed Atheist, looking over a summer landscape, on one of those days when the whole earth seems full of beauty and of happy life, and suddenly the man said: ‘Ah! how much there is to be thankful for!’ ‘Thankful to whom?’ said my friend. That thankful feeling, implies not only the word, but something that means it. You cannot be thankful to electricity or gravitation, or lifeless processes of development! And so with this sense of beauty; I think this also, like the feeling of thankfulness, almost instinctively suggests something that means it, conscious infinite life. And as it touches us so, surely we may trust it. It is one of the avenues by which the Divine seeks out the Human, and draws us to itself—a gate which seems to open toward the Infinite, and through which we pass beyond the veil!

And now, a few words more, to emphasise this other thought—that we use beauty as a gate—do look beyond it, do enter in by it ! Because it is very easy not to do. This very sense of Beauty, and delight in it, has its temptation as well as its help. It tempts men to treat beauty as a mere luxury of the senses instead of one of the gateways of the spirit ; it tempts them to make beauty, not the gate to lead men into a yet holier presence, but to make it, itself, their temple, their religion, and their God. It tempts them to be satisfied with refined and beautiful luxury ; to think more of what is pleasant and comely and fair, than of what is pure, and true, and right.

I do not put this as one of the worst temptations of the time, but it is one of them. It is always one of the temptations of those who have got beyond the reach of want, and have money and leisure, and especially of those who have a keen sense of what is beautiful and a high appreciation of art. And history shows what hold it may take of men, even of whole peoples, and what corruption it may work ! That whole Greek people in the ancient world—you know what beauty was to them, what a marvellous sense of it they had, what joy in it, what power of creating it. But it became all they cared for ; was their morality, their religion ;—and then it wrought such moral feebleness and corruption that the old Greek life, lying there in its Gate

Beautiful, was only a crippled, impotent life,—as if that lame man Peter and John looked upon—lame, powerless amid that wealth of the Beautiful—might have been a parable of it ! And many another illustration of the same thing you may find. Look through the dwellings of that old buried city—Pompeii—mark the marvellous beauty of everything, from their statues and paintings down to their very lamps and pitchers,—such forms and designs of delicate art as the art workmen of the modern world are glad even to copy. That old life was swathed in beauty—and yet rotten at its core with indescribable foulness. And it was much the same with Italy in the later day when the Medici had made their land the luxurious home of all that was choicest in art. And so with France in the time of Louis XIV. And so, too, with many a man whose name has been famous in his time as the connoisseur in art and the worshipper of all things beautiful. There is nothing more delusive than this worship of the beautiful may be, because it seems so noble, and yet is really compatible with every kind of selfishness, and pride, and even of base corruption. Why, it may touch a man with a fastidious distaste for all the common work and struggle of the world ; it may give him a contempt for ordinary homes and ordinary people who cannot have everything ‘ beautiful ’ about them ; it may seem to lift him up above

the duties and limitations of the old established righteousness of life, so that he views the 'painful riddle of the earth' with mere supercilious interest, and feels as if the old pieties and purities of mankind were lower things to which 'Art' rises superior; and so, by subtle steps, and the association into which it may so easily lead with things base and sensual, it may sink life into a deep degradation, all the more base for being coated over with an air of gloss and refinement. We have seen something in our day of what may become of the mere worship of the beautiful, under the influence of that deadliest piece of cant that 'art has no connection with morality'; I think that it is this, which has led man on, in that sort of eruption of the sexual and sensual in our time, which is degrading literature and the drama, and everything it touches, not, I trust very widely or permanently, but with a passionate self-assertion about it, which makes it seem more than it is!

Ah, friends, I count among the great privileges of our day, the growing taste and appreciation for things beautiful, the increasing facilities for studying them and having forms of beauty around us. I have not a word to say against this! I rejoice in it! I rejoice in the growing feeling that the objects of the highest art ought not to be regarded as mere private property—that in a deep sense they belong to mankind. I do not



think a 'Palace of Art' is going to change the whole life of a district—but it must bring some uplift of interest and happiness into lives otherwise crushed down by hard conditions of poverty and toil. So I rejoice in all the eagerness to have forms of higher beauty in every part of life! I thank God for all this. I do not want our age to go back, either in home or church, to the grim Puritanism that frowned on beauty. Only—for one thing I do not put beauty above all,—and, for another, remember that the more everything is beautiful around us, the more everything should be beautiful within! Sweet home-feeling and affection, yes—even plain comfort are worth more than 'beauty' in a home; and truth should be worth a thousand times more in a church! It is a poor look-out for Christianity when men will shirk what they know to be God's truth, and count themselves in on the side of error or lifeless forms because the lifeless forms and the error happen to have the finest music or the most beautiful building! Beware, lest beauty become the chief thing, instead of a means to life's real worth and goodness. For, beauty—here is the stern sad truth of it—beauty, if it is not ennobled by the highest use, tends ever to the lower. If it is not used as the gateway, but as the temple itself, it does not remain a temple. Beginning by being man's temple, where he worships beauty, it is by and by degraded into his couch, where

his life dreams out in elegant indolence, and finally becomes his tomb in which all the noble manhood decays away.

After all, the great point is, to learn to see and feel, how, highest of all the forms of beauty, towers the morally beautiful! Fairer than all earth's diadems is 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.' A real face, touched with the happy glory of pure motherhood, outweighs all Raphael's madonnas! No grace of beauty in form or feature is equal to the open eye of blameless honour; or the gentle look of unselfish kindness. The 'beauty of holiness' is the divinest grace man's life can know. So, in the innermost and most lasting realities, the good and the beautiful touch and blend, and by the simple pathway of right, life's highest beauty must be won:—

'I slept and dreamed that life was beauty;  
I woke, and found that life was duty.  
Was then thy dream a shadowy lie?  
Toil on, poor heart, courageously,  
And thou shalt find thy dream to be  
A noon-day light and truth to thee!'

### III.

#### MAN'S PART IN EVOLUTION.

*'We are labourers together with God.'* (I Cor. iii. 9.)

'LABOURERS with God.' In that great work of building up mankind into that nobler future which Christ called 'the Kingdom of God'—man has a part. Has it ever struck you how closely this great religious thought touches some of the great thoughts which thinkers are busy with in the world of science? For this faith in a nobler future for man, what is it but the scientist's belief in evolution, only looking to the future instead of to the past? And so this word, 'We are labourers together with God,' translated into the terms of science, is simply 'man's part in evolution.'

I like to look at these things together. I want to speak of man's own part in this great evolution of humanity. The fact is, that the whole bearing of this great scientific thought of development upon religion and morality is a question of the deepest interest. When first the greatness of this

scientific thought burst upon the wondering mind of our time, there was an idea that it would almost cut away the ground from under religion. ~~I do not know that~~ this feeling was <sup>never</sup> expressed—and at the same time its shallowness exposed—better than in that saying of Frances Power Cobbe, ‘It is a curious thing,’ said Miss Cobbe, ‘that as soon as men find out how anything is done, they should immediately rush to the conclusion that God did not do it.’ I think, however, that that idea is pretty well past. God’s part in Evolution becomes only more evident, the more the subject is examined. We cannot get that idea of evolution working, we cannot keep it working, without recognising, back of all things and in all things, some mighty, mysterious power and energy, which, the more we look at it, the more we have to think of it as life and will, and to call it by some name of God.]

Yes, God’s part in evolution is safe enough. But what is still apt to be overshadowed and forgotten is, that man has a part in it also. You see—when we think of all things working on in such massive cosmic order, and man part of that order, it is so easy to feel as if man’s struggles or efforts, what he does, or does not, cannot really matter, are nothing in the vast result. And therefore it is that I want to lay still more stress on this great truth—that man has a part in evolution, too—a part which, in the noblest of

it, rests with his own free power to do, a part for which man is responsible, and to which belong the great realities of morality and conscience.

Even in the realm of outward nature man has a part in evolution. Whatever it is—God or Force—that has caused all things to be, and man to be, as ‘the roof and crown of things,’ has caused man to be a little creator and providence himself. Man, now, has his part in what this earth is becoming. You know how the climate of various countries has been changing through all the centuries of civilized man’s existence in them—changing by the forests man has felled and the cities he has built, and the trees he has planted and the crops he has sowed! The climate of Kansas and Nebraska is changing to-day. It is said that the rain-area is advancing twenty miles a year, over the old American desert where once nothing but the lizard and the prairie-dog could live. Only small matters? So! But science does not recognise great and small. The wing of a fly is as much to science as the tusk of a mammoth. And, all through nature, wherever man comes in contact with it, he does so with a power of making fresh starts of evolution and initiating developments of his own. It is man’s part in evolution which has developed the moss-rose out of the wild-briar, the fine wheat out of the wild grasses.] You see the same thing still more strikingly in the animal kingdom. Your

famous breeds of horses and cattle, are man's creation—by development. Compare your sheep-dog or your setter with the wild canine stock. Association with man has evolved in them something almost of human intelligence and feeling. All animals that man has gathered around him to share his life, seem gradually to have acquired something of this.

Here is, in the lower range of things, the part left for man in the evolution of outward nature. God gives man all things in the rough, as it were—leaves him to develop them further ; and without man's part faithfully performed, there could not be a loaf of bread evolved out of a wheat field, nor a woollen coat out of a sheep's fleece. }

But it is in our own human life and being that our part in evolution comes out most strikingly. Man's own will and effort constitute one of the factors in his progress. You remember the little child's quaint answer to the question, 'who made you?' Said she, 'God made me so long, and I grew the rest myself.' 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained wisdom!' The little girl's answer touched the very heart of the matter. We are made, intellectually and morally, just about so long ; that is not our doing—'it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves'—but, after all, there is a good deal that we have to 'grow ourselves' and that we can grow ourselves. }

Nature in man, as in everything else, seems to be evolved up to a certain point by unconscious forces, without any conscious effort of man's; but you get no noblest manhood that way. From the moment man arrives at conscious life, not merely at being, but at thinking about his being, a new element begins to come in. However man got to where he is, he does not get a step further without his own effort. You may not be able to trace exactly where this new element of personal effort comes in, but it does come in. You can recognise it by the entirely new and higher set of principles which it brings into operation. Among the brutes, and also in the lowest grade of human progress, development has come, they say, by the natural selection of struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. Strength, self-assertion have been the conditions of rising at that lower end of the scale. But when life has come up to the stage of conscious man, his further rise is, partly at least by very different qualities from these. Instead of mere selfish struggle, you have the law of love coming in. Instead of mere self-assertion, self-denial begins to be the important agent. Instead of development by the gratification of the natural impulses, man progresses by restraining them! The brute develops by lying down just when it is inclined to do, and eating just as much as it wants to eat. The first step in man's higher progress is,



when he begins to rouse himself and not lie down when he is inclined, and to restrain himself from his full appetites. Evidently a new factor has entered into the combination; henceforth man has to do his own free part in his own evolution, else he will stop where he is, or even fall back. I do not say that this factor of man's free part is much;—perhaps the true statement would be that it is not much at once. Theodore Parker used to say that man's life was only about three parts out of the hundred freedom, the rest, necessity. That is not much to claim for free-will—the veriest necessarian might concede that much! But then, even three per cent. of moral freedom, if made the most of, and constantly turned over, may mount up gradually to a considerable increase of that stock-in-trade with which man started. That little three per cent. of free effort has brought man from skins to broad-cloth; from the wigwam to the modern house; from the rude tradition chanted by the camp fire to the printed book; from the rude torch to the electric light. In religion, it has brought man from the instinct of fetish-worship to the communion of spiritual prayer; and in morality, from the measureless revenge of the savage to the measured law 'for a tooth only a tooth'; and on to the unmeasured love of forgiveness 'unto seventy times seven!' In a word, it is that little free part of man's own,

even if it be only three per cent. which, not buried in the napkin of indolence or fatalism, but put out to interest in busy striving life—has brought man from savagism up to civilization, and in which lie the possibilities of further progress still—the potentialities of the hero, sage and saint in this world,—to say nothing of the angel in the life to come.]

Yes; and the solemnity of this fact of how much rests upon the right fulfilment of this part of ours in our evolution, upon rightly using this little percentage of free effort—the solemnity of this is heightened by seeing what comes of not using it, of not doing our part. We are apt to forget that man can go backward as well as forward. We talk largely of human progress, as if it was a constant, permanent, self-acting thing. But the merest glance at history ought to teach us that it is nothing of the kind. History tells as many stories of national decay, as of national progress. Look at Egypt: where is the race that reared the Pyramids, and chiselled the Sphinx, and piled up the massive fanes of Luxor, and cut a ship-canal from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, forty centuries before our conceited day? Where are the races that walked in the vast terraced gardens of Babylon, or studied in those libraries of Nineveh, from whose clay-tablets scholars are spelling out the ancient world's lost learning? Where will you look for the

successors of the Greeks at their wisest, or the Romans at their strongest? The earth is the monument of buried races as well as of buried men! And why? Because God's forces of evolution failed? No, but because, somewhere, man's part in those forces failed. Because men ceased to be 'labourers together with God,' ceased to press onward, let go in self-indulgence the stronger manhood which makes for lasting progress. And the condition of peoples, to-day, tells the same tale. Look back and note the rise of Puritanism in the modern world,—I do not mean our Puritanism merely, but that entire religious movement which was the noblest element along the whole line of the Reformation. The essence of that Puritanism, was the upspringing of a new sense of personal responsibility to God, of free individual life with God, as against a religion done by priests; of a duty of man to try and win the world for God's Kingdom, instead of leaving it any longer under the sway of the powers of evil. Those old religious heroes among the nations, had not the phrases of modern science, but their whole movement was a mighty effort to rouse men to do their part in developing this world into the Kingdom of God. And you may follow the story of that struggle here and there,—and just as they succeeded in it—or failed, human life rose higher in great sweeps of progress, or sank back into anarchy, torpor, or decay. And how potent

in modern history—whether you measure by its presence or its absence—has been this single movement in mankind of the great Puritan sense of a part to do for God, and of a great earnestness in doing it.

And here is one of the lessons for England to-day, and for these peoples of English speech and blood that are spreading so mightily over the world. We are too apt to take 'progress' for granted. America talks of a hundred millions of people as almost in sight; Australia and South Africa dream dreams of vast and populous empires spreading out into the wilderness. And England still (with less talk but not less pride), looks forward to ever greater power and civilization. Well, I believe it may be so. But how? How shall real greatness come? I do not count mere numbers anything. What good even in census tables rivalling those of China? The real question is—what will be the quality of all that aggregated human life? Rome teemed with life in the decadence of the Empire, as it had never done in the vigour of the Republic. Is that real, permanent, national greatness going to evolve itself, and meanwhile every one spends his life for self and gain, and luxury and pleasure grow more passionately engrossing?—or by any form of the mere 'struggle for existence,' and 'survival of the fittest'? No! Those may work the evolution of the brutes. It is by quite other prin-

ciples that there comes real human development. It is by the doing of things which are not pleasant and the study of things which do not pay to-day ; it is by earnest self-control, and struggling to help the existence of others ; and mutual help, and brotherly succour to help the unfittest to become more fit ; and all through, by brave, fearless, untiring public spirit. These are the things that make men and nations, truly, progressively, permanently great ; without these, the richer luxury is only the costlier tomb ; without these, the denser population is only the larger pack of wolves.

And so, 'man's part in evolution' all comes back at last to individual faithfulness and effort. This is where the old Bible touches, after all, the newest thought of science. Only, while science generalizes along vast chains of sequence in which man's individual part seems lost, and calls the whole 'evolution,' the Bible focusses its light, just on man's individual part and calls it 'duty,' and its result 'salvation.' (What is salvation, but your and my development out of weakness into strength, out of poor mean loves and aims into good and high ones, out of what we have drifted into by yielding to ease or appetite into what we may become by striving against them ?) Is the Bible full of salvation ? It is full of evolution, then—just that part of evolution at which we are. 'Work out your own salvation' is just the Bible

form of what I have been putting to you—‘man’s part in evolution.’

And do not let any one think that in turning from what science terms ‘evolution’ to what religion calls ‘salvation’ I am turning from a great thing to a small one, from the grand facts of the universe to some mere small talk of the pulpit. Is the importance of life, or the changes in life, to be measured by mere length of time? ‘Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.’ Fifty years of man’s development are of more moment than a hundred cycles of that silent, geologic past. Why, the patient struggle of heart and will by which a man overcomes one favourite sin and develops himself clear of it, is something compared to which the changes which developed the prairie grasses into wheat are as nothing, even though they may have taken measureless ages. To take one little street arab and evolve out of him an honest man, to get hold of one poor, lost, hopeless life and lift it up into decency and self-respect,—aye, or even to take one little infant life in any of your homes and develop that single mind and character into the very best that it has in it to become—I tell you these are the grandest realities of evolution, grander than all the long development through measureless geologic periods.

So let us welcome that thought of evolution,—only, get the right perspective of it. Remember

that the noblest thing about it is, that in it which is going on to-day and in which you and I have actual part. Look back on it, as far as ever you can, trace all the marvellous ways in which it may have wrought ; but still, look most earnestly at it in the living present, for this is the pregnant point in it ; on this hangs not the mere theoretic explanation of the past, but the practical unfolding of the future. The evolution which matters most to you and me, is that by which out of a poor to-day we may evolve a better to-morrow ; and by which, in our little corner of the world, we may help on that better world that is to be. There is our part. God help us every one to do it !



#### IV.

### THE GOODNESS POSSIBLE IN UNLIKELY PLACES.

*'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?'*

*(John i. 46.)*

My subject is, the goodness possible in unlikely places. Nazareth was one of those unlikely places, a little town that had a bad name, and from which nobody expected any good. The whole district of Galilee in which it lay was despised by the Jews proper—the blue-blooded Jews of Jerusalem—they looked on the Galileans altogether as a race of turbulent, half-breed provincials, who spoke a rude dialect, were careless about the law, and were only a degree better than the utterly outcast Samaritans. Nobody expected much from Galilee—from Nazareth, nothing. So there is the encouragement in remembering what did come out of Nazareth. Because, in reality, the world is full of Nazareths—posts in life, conditions, occupations, circumstances that seem, especially to those who are in them, quite incompatible

with any sweet, fine, noble life. And it is an encouragement for ever, to such places and to those who are in them, to remember that out of just as unlikely a place came the central figure of history, and the divinest life that the world has ever seen.

I should like to bring out the full force of this encouragement, especially for those who have to do with such places. But it is not easy, because of the sort of glorification which has come over Jesus and over Nazareth. We are apt to think of Jesus as one whose life was somehow quite different from others. Even when people have got beyond that most obscuring mistake of all, of thinking that he was God in human form, still, even the humanity that is left is usually thought of as not very human. People seem to fancy that the Christ-life was all religion and doing good ; and they think of that as something which must have been very holy and beautiful, perhaps the sort of life that we may all be glad to live in Heaven, but out of the question down here in the common world. For life, as it actually meets us, has to have a great deal in it besides religion and doing good. Life seems full of hard facts and hindering entanglements—noise and business and hurry, the distractions of society, the fret and sore of anxieties, the triviality of infinite little details. There is no getting away from these things. People have to live in them,

to make the best of them ; to live, not the life they would like, but what they can. And so they are apt to think : ' what use to talk to us of Christ, or what use to talk of Christ to those who are in such places ? He knew nothing of all those hindrances and difficulties ; it must have been so different with him ! '

Was it ? There is the help of remembering Nazareth. The more I read these Gospels and try to see through them and behind them to the homely reality of that little commonplace town, and of the life amidst which Jesus must have grown up there, the more I feel that his surroundings can not have been so different from those of others. I do not lose one lineament of that majestic personality, one touch of that heavenly sweetness and goodness which the Gospels represent to us. But that did not come all at once. That was not all there to begin with. That is the crowning, completing perfectness of a life that simply began, much as all life begins—had to be subject to his parents, was ' tempted at all points like as we are,' learned obedience by the things that he suffered—every word we have about it telling of experience essentially like that of others.

There is the significance of Christ having lived all the first thirty years of his life, in that commonplace little Nazareth. How do you suppose he lived ? No word told about it ? Why, that very

absence of record is itself information. For remember how, afterwards, every hint of anything out of the common way was eagerly gleaned up and even magnified. So, that absence of anything to tell, from twelve years up to thirty, is about as good evidence as we could have, that during those years he was living, outwardly, the common life of the place and the people. And do you see what that means? Dare you see? Do you suppose that that little flat-roofed house where Joseph lived was different from everybody else's home, or the carpenter's shed in it, different from all other workshops? Do you suppose that that home was a sort of little heaven where life was all serenity, and people were never hot and tired and impatient? They call it the holy family, and the old painters were never tired of making pictures of it. You know them. There is the Mary-mother sitting quietly with a rapt look in her face, and the little Christ-child on her knee, and the child is playing with a lamb, and a dove is hovering near. Well, that is very beautiful, and true surely for some sweet, quiet times, when her heart was filled with such thoughts as mothers only know, of what they long for their children to become. But how much of her time would that be? For Mary was a poor man's wife, and besides Jesus, we read of 'James and Joses and Juda and Simon,' four sons besides Jesus; and 'sisters' are mentioned, two at least,

then—seven persons besides father and mother,—and do you suppose such a family was kept cared for by the mother sitting looking up to heaven, and the children playing with a lamb? Is all this too trivial? If it was not too trivial for him to live in for thirty years, it is not too trivial for us to recall. Just a frugal, busy home,—eight or nine of a family—and all the work to be done—the very work which afterwards came into his parables—the ‘two women grinding at the mill,’ and the ‘three measures of meal,’ to be made into the bread; and not too many pieces of silver, so that when one of them got lost, his mother could not let it go, but had to do the very thing he described, ‘to light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently till she found it.’

And so with that carpenter’s shed. I saw, a while ago, that some one was sadly shocked at the idea that Jesus ever actually helped his father in the work there. I should be much more shocked if I thought that he did not. What else but his working there can it mean when the villagers said afterwards, ‘Is not this the carpenter?’ Yes, that is the beautiful fact, that it was in the Nazareth of the world’s common work that the world’s greatest life grew up! And will you try to suppose that it was a sort of glorified workshop, where the work was a kind of sacred show, that the wood had no knots in it, and clumsy hands never got ugly gashes from hammer and

chisel. Don't you suppose Joseph ever did any work that he could not get paid for, and sometimes found it hard work to let the hired man have his wage and Mary the market-money? And were the others in the workshop a company of saints who never got angry and used bad language like the scolding Syrian villagers to-day? Or, will you suppose that Jesus only worked there a little now and then for the form of the thing, and that most of the time he was away in that beautiful scenery round, which Renan describes, lost in ecstatic meditation.

Now do you see what it means, that Nazareth was such a mean little town that it seemed absurd to think of any good coming out of it; and that nevertheless out of it, out of one of its crowded little homes, and out of one of its common little workshops, came Jesus, Jesus whom the villagers so counted one of themselves that they resented his setting himself up as a teacher. There, in that crowded little home, he had grown up into a sweet wondering childhood. It was mainly his mother's doing, surely,—the whole way in which her loving interest, in all his ministry comes out, shews that unmistakably; and she had done it so effectually that by the time he went to Jerusalem, at twelve years old, he was full of wondering thoughts and questions that kept him in that inquiry room of the temple just lost in questioning and listening, after his parents had set off

home again. How much that tells us ! And then the long home-years again—and all around him the buzz of Messianic hopes, talk which the little ears drank in, and the little heart pondered over—from many a neighbour who stood talking with Joseph about the wild revolts that even in those years were seething in the very air of Galilee, and now and then breaking out in open insurrection. It was something of this insurrectionary kind, only on a larger, grander scale for which men looked for the Messiah—but through those years it kept growing upon his heart that that was not the glad tidings the prophets had foretold, that that was not ‘the Kingdom of God’ that was to come ! And all the time his heart, pondering these things, and nourishing itself in the great scriptures which kept opening more and more in their true meaning of religious promise for the world, was growing into a closer sense of God and love of prayer. There, in that common work and among common workers and neighbours, he grew into that silent strength, and meekness, and holiness, and clear communion with the spirit, till at length it took hold of him as a Divine bidding, that he, even he, would have to go forth and shew men the larger good tidings of God ! which was so clear to him, but of which his people had no idea. So he became the Christ in a loftier sense than even the prophets had dreamed of, taught the world a new and purer religion



which yet was only the old fulfilled into its fullest meaning, started a new idea of life, set moving a new unconquerable warfare against evil, and so gradually drew the best heart of the world to him, that even the despised little town has become a sacred place, and its poorest stones are precious monuments for ever!

‘No good out of Nazareth,’ then? There is no Nazareth in this world out of which good may not come. That is the lesson for us. And in some ways the world has learned it. We have learned that it is not out of palaces, not out of the world’s rich and favoured places that greatness is apt to spring. It has become one of the commonplace of historical moralizing that it is from the sheepfold and the peasant’s cot that God is apt to choose his great ones. Robert Burns from his plough; the artist Turner from his barber’s shop; Chantry from his milk-cart; Abraham Lincoln from his rail-splitting; and a hundred others, if I had time to count them over, have taught the world out of what humble Nazareths genius and perseverance may force their upward way. And even in the higher matter, for it is really higher, of goodness, we have learned the lesson in certain ways. Some of our modern novelists have set quite a fashion for bringing out this very point, of the goodness possible in unlikely places; and a while ago there was quite a *furor* for heroes and heroines from mining

camps, and coal pits, and the world's moral wastes generally. Perhaps it may have been a little overdone, and still it was a wholesome reaction against the old romantic school which ran so much into the annals of fashion and gentility.

Yes, the world has partly learned the lesson in some ways, but there is a great deal of it still to learn. We want to learn it, for one thing, to give us more faith and patience in doing that work which should be our special interest, our mission work, in the dense parts of our great cities. It is apt to seem so small and so discouraging—a Sunday School often with a good deal of disorder in it, and sadly little that seems like real learning; a few evening classes and meetings; Sunday services with sadly few attendants.—No, it does not seem much,—it is a beautiful patience which keeps the workers to their task, year after year, in spite of all the discouragement they find. But I think it is just the glimpse they get every now and then of this truth of the goodness that is possible in those unlikely places. One here and there is picked up out of the gutter, and started in the upward way of self-improvement and honest work. There a drunkard is coaxed away from his bad companions and set upon his feet—and does not always stand perhaps, but still is followed in his lapses and brought back, and at last set really upon his feet. There a poor hopeless drudge—who was growing

shiftless and slatternly at home, and letting it all go to ruin, is reached by some kind friendly hand, and cheered and helped to take a little new pride and care for that lost home. And you never know where the good of these things stops. Sixty years ago, there was a young lad in one of our Lancashire Sunday Schools, who was the despair of the school, rough, lawless, constantly in some trouble or disgrace; but one of the teachers would not let him be turned out. 'Nay,' his teacher said to me one day, 'when we first got hold of that lad, he was one of the lost little street arabs of the town—and we cannot say much for him now, but we will make a man of him yet.' And so they held on to him, and they did make a man of him. And it was not just that life saved alone, but a new line of good started in the world. His family have done well. I had a letter from one of his sons not a month ago on some congregational business,—busy, respected men they are now, with families of their own. No, you never know where the good will stop, when you do find it in these unlikely places and bring it out and give it some sunshine of loving care and helpful goodness!

And it is not only a word for such lost dense districts where all the surroundings are apt to seem bad. It is a word for the world's common, average life. There is no word of Nazareth's being a bad place—only a poor, common sort of

place from which no one looked for any special good, and which probably expected none itself. That also is where the lesson comes closest home to us for ourselves. Because men are apt to feel just so about the common posts and places of life, in which they themselves mostly are. How can any good be looked for out of such places, such a lot, as theirs? Working-men feel it. Speak to them of the Christian life, in any high strong reality of it—and it will seem almost a mystery to them. What?—with long hours, and rough hard work, and all sorts of coarse goings-on about them, how can any one in such a ‘Nazareth’ be expected to think of high things? And business men are apt to feel it just the same. Their way to make; always to be thinking about making money; and to mix with a world all eager with the same thought; and having to be so keen to succeed, and then the worries and anxieties of it all—what a poor, sordid ‘Nazareth’ it all seems to them, how can it be possible that they should feel much of the grace of God there or try for any high Christian mark of life, there?

And so it is indeed with almost any place you may be set to occupy in life! It may even seem a pretty good place to others, but to you who are in it, it seems full of all sorts of little hindrances and obstacles, a very Nazareth of common-place life, with nothing noble or elevating about it, nor any opportunity for any.

Oh friends, we hold our human life, and the free power that God has planted in us all too cheap! We give up too readily to this sense of the difficulties in the way of trying for the best and noblest life that we can see, where we are. And therefore God has given us this lesson of Christ, not only of what a high, pure life it was, the very highest life of sonship and consecrated duty, but also of how it came out of one of earth's most unlikely places.

So I ask you to have more faith in the possibilities of unlikely places. Have faith in them for others. Do not regard any place as lost or hopeless. Be not afraid to try, even in the meanest streets, to get hold of human hearts, and in the lowest depths to lift them up by Christ's influences of love and pity and helpfulness and hope. Have faith in them for yourselves. Prove, where you are, the presence of God and the power of Christ's great ideal. There seek the opportunities of helping others. There bear whatever crosses may come to you in the willing spirit which may change them by and by to crowns. And it shall never be all in vain. No good can ever be quite lost. Sometimes the good finds unexpected root and grows up into some conspicuous life of useful service in the world; but always it has its place among the silent forces which keep evolving from the world that is, the nobler world that is to be.

## V.

### CHRIST'S REAL COUNSEL ABOUT THE MORROW.

*'Be not therefore anxious for the morrow.'*

*(Matt. vi. 34.)*

THE Revised Version has done, perhaps, no greater service to practical religion, than in changing the old phrase 'Take no thought for the morrow' which was neither Christ's word, nor his thought, into his real saying, 'Be not anxious for the morrow.' That change has substituted a very wise and necessary counsel, always wanted, for a supposed divine word which has done much mischief. Christ's supposed precept to 'take no thought for the morrow,' could not cause men, indeed, to obey it, the necessities of life were too strong for that; but it has caused them to have a constant misgiving as if 'taking thought' was wrong, contrary to their religion, something of a lower sort of life. And really it was not. It was always praiseworthy. It is taking thought for the morrow which is the first characteristic

of orderly onward life. Man cannot live without taking thought. Man ought not to live without it. And it has been a real mischief, that forethought, so necessary and so good, should thus have been—though not actually prevented, yet discouraged and discredited.

And the mischief has not stopped there. This false idea, that Christ forbade all taking thought for the morrow, in the older days only discredited forethought, but in these modern days it has been used to discredit Christ and Christianity. I do not think there is any precept of the New Testament which has been oftener held up to ridicule and made a handle against Christianity than this. It has been the stock argument of sceptics to prove the absurdity and impracticability of Christ's teachings—that he discourages forethought and prudent effort, and bids man leave all to God. The great German, Strauss, almost gloated over 'the improvidence of Christianity.' Even the very illustrations with which Christ pointed his words, and which ought to have prevented such a misinterpretation of them, have been made to help it! I remember hearing a leading lecturer against Christianity, many years ago, clinch his argument with—'There's Christianity for you! You are not to be prudent and work and spin; but are just to sit idle, like a bird on a tree, waiting for providence to drop the food into your mouth.' 'But then,' I ventured to remark (and I shall never



forget how the audience of Lancashire factory-workers took the point), 'if the birds where Christ was, ever sat idle on trees, waiting for their food to drop into their mouths, they must have been a very rare and curious species! I never saw any birds of that kind! Men often do wait for something to turn up, like Mr. Micawber, but birds never—they go to work to turn it up for themselves!'

And it is so, you know. Watch the rooks in a ploughed field in the spring-time. Not a parable of idle trust, that! Nor the lilies either! While the birds are scratching and picking at the surface, the lilies are silently reaching out their tiny fingers of root and fibre underneath, honestly winning their sustenance after their kind. Do you ask of what then did Christ take the ravens and the lilies as illustrations? Of this—not of trustful idleness but of trustful activity! Man has to work for food and clothing, like everything else in God's world,—'All the nations seek after these things and your father knoweth that ye have need of them,' Christ says—this necessity is his very starting point—but 'have a little more happy trust in your working!' That is where the lilies and the birds may teach us. 'Consider the fowls of the air!' They do not wear themselves out, piling their barns and storehouses with food, food, food, beyond all possible want; they have no ambitions, speculations, and heart-burning dis-

appointments and sleepless nights about their prospects. They work indeed, hard enough after their kind, but they do it in a happy, invigorating kind of way, thinking, planning, working for to-morrow, but not worrying, not being anxious about it. That was what Christ would have taught to the life around him. It was growing more and more needful. The old simple Hebrew pastoral life was passing away. Foreign rule had brought in foreign luxuries, and the Jews had begun that keen trading career which had planted their colonies in every city of the Roman Empire. The struggle for wealth was growing; 'beware of covetousness,' Christ said, and the most insidious kind of covetousness was just this over-absorption in getting the things which man had to get and was intended to get. But such a moderate counsel it was! Christianity was never a religion of either sloth or shiftlessness. Christ's people needed no insistence on activity or industry, for the Jews in those days were noted as among the busiest and most plodding folk in the world. But when Christianity spread in Gentile lands, and often among softer and less energetic characters in Asia, Greece, and Italy, the Apostle's interpretation of the Gospel includes many a sterling word inculcating both industry and prudence. 'If any will not work neither let him eat,' says Paul,—and again, 'provide things honest in the sight of all men,' and again, 'If any provide not

for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, he is worse than an infidel'—and always there is that beautiful word to be 'not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' By all means, love and kindness; but wherever the Gospel came it taught men not less, but more industry. So that Christ's real meaning has never been in any real danger.

But as modern life has grown intenser, we cannot afford to have a great moderating teaching left to a mere general impression of its not meaning quite the extreme thing it seemed to do. We want the positive teaching of less anxious labour, in this modern life almost more than ever before. In the larger sweep of modern enterprise we want it. Business is always a road with more or less uncertainty ahead. In hard times, the uncertainties become very great. Well, what is the true thing to do? I will tell you what is the thing many do. They let go the good which life has, in anxiously forecasting all the possibilities of the evil it may hereafter have. They look on,—not as far as they can see, that is prudent forethought and is right,—but, further than they can see. Their very anxiety conjures up all sorts of difficulties ahead. They are constantly worrying about them. They bear the burden not of to-morrow only, but of many to-morrows; they take their worries home with them; they cannot enjoy the peace and quiet there. The wife feels the

shadow resting on the anxious heart ; the little children cannot have that ' children's hour ' which might be the sweet healer of each day's cares, yes, and you yourself cannot have that full rest and renewal which is one of the conditions of being fresh and ready for whatever may come. Is there any good in that ? And was it not the very counsel man needs—' Be not anxious about the morrow. The morrow will be anxious for itself—sufficient for the day ' is its own anxiety.

You see, the philosophy of it lies here. Our wisdom is, to look fairly ahead, so far as our looking and thinking can affect matters. Yet even in looking so far ahead, the more calmly and trustfully we can do it, the more clear, and steady, and effective will our foresight be. Of course there are always invisible possibilities of disaster and calamity. That bank may break ; this ship may be lost ; the man you depend upon may die ; you yourself may be struck down by accident or disease. Are you omniscient that you should be able to provide against every possibility ? Provide fairly against such contingencies, and then do not worry about them. If you are to be thinking about them all the time, all the fresh energy and joy of life will be lost. The old proverb says it is foolish to count one's chickens before they are hatched, but I think it is still more foolish to discount them ! It is by hope man is saved, says St. Paul, and it is true in plenty of things besides in the salvation of the soul.

There is one application of this thought of not being anxious about the future which seems to come in among these forecastings of life, I mean its application to our thinking. This is an era of action, but it is also a great era of thinking. Man's great thoughts, of truth, and liberty, and right, even his religious ideas and faiths, are a part of the assets of happy and secure life. And people are apt to be afraid of the to-morrow of truth. So the first steps in geology were distrusted for fear they might endanger the infallibility of Genesis. So again, when Darwin began to announce that he was finding everywhere in Nature evidences of development and evolution, a great many people instead of quietly examining the evidence as to whether it was so, began to look ahead to see what it would lead to. And it seemed to them that it would lead to many difficulties, and so they shook their heads at it as a dangerous idea! But that was all wrong. The only real question was not what will it lead to, but is it true;—follow the truth!

Said old Lyman Beecher once, 'Dr. Taylor, I will follow the truth if it does not lead me over Niagara.' But Dr. Taylor said, 'I will follow it even if it does!' Of course it does not, really. It may lead often to torrents that we can hear the noise of, long before we can see whether there are any ways over them. But as a fact, if there were apparently impassable chasms, in that theory

of evolution, for instance, man is on the right side of them! No matter how we got here, we are here. We are now, men—men with souls—and moral life—and God. No fear of our having to go back from these grand convictions—for they are more than faith, they are facts of our being! And I do think it is such a beautiful spirit to cultivate—that of a quiet, open-eyed readiness to look honestly into all the new thoughts of the evergrowing world—not jumping at them just because they are new, before they have given in their credentials—but also never shunning or avoiding them because of any consequences that might possibly have to follow! Be not anxious about the to-morrow of truth!

But, apart from these larger applications of the principle of not being anxious about the future, after all, the greatest help from it is in the common daily decisions and actions of practical life. Some people are always worrying over the possibility that what they do may not in the end turn out to have been the best thing. Even when the course they are taking seems distinctly the right course, so that as they take it, they feel that they hardly have any choice, still they will trouble themselves with all sorts of anxieties as to how it may result. Well, of course, it may lead to difficulties, perhaps to trouble. Perhaps, looking back, in the clearer after light, we may see that, after all, the course we took was not the

only course, though at the moment it seemed so. But what of that? That is only to say that you and I are not omniscient. Of course we are not.

I always like to recall that word of Mohammed to one of his Arab followers. The Prophet overheard the man say, as they were camping—‘I will loose my camel and then commit it to God.’ ‘Friend!’ said the Prophet—‘tie thy camel, and then commit it to God!’ Yes, that is the true philosophy, and the true religion! ‘Tie your camel!’ Tie it as well as you know how—and then leave it—go to sleep, sleep in peace! Don’t lie awake, thinking over all the possibilities of mishap, how, after all, the hobbles might come off, and worrying yourself over what you would do then! Do you hesitate whether to go here first, or there? Whether to follow your friends’ advice on a certain matter you are doubtful about? Which school to send your daughter to, or what to do with your son, or which side of some perplexing question to take, when you would rather not take any, but have to do. Well, look ahead as far as you fairly can. Try with a real desire for the right, to make out which is right; think about it; take advice about it if you will, only understanding that after all, it is you who have to decide, and not your friend; yes, pray about it, there is more help in prayer, towards the true quiet light of life, than many take account of,—



in a word 'tie your camel'—and then act. And when you have acted the best you know, then leave it—yes, 'commit it to God.' There may be difficulties—pretty sure to be some—whatever way you take. There is no road in all this confused life of man, but is sure to have some awkward places here and there—never mind that. As Abraham Lincoln was fond of saying, 'don't cross those bridges till you come to them!' but, to-day, if the step you take is the best step you can see, tread it firmly, committing your way unto the Lord.

For now, finally, I want to turn to this thought which gathers all this moralizing together, and lifts it into its true place in something greater than morals. Because, how is all this I have been speaking of, to be done? Is it just by a little exercise of self-discipline? Or is it by a sort of fatalism stolidly accepting the inevitable? Is it the mere stoical shrugging our shoulders as at things which we cannot help and therefore may as well not trouble about?

No! Nothing of the kind. These are only poor substitutes for the true thing. What we need is not this fatalism or stoicism or any kind of indifference. It is the quiet restful trust of feeling how little indeed it is that we can see or do, but of feeling that beyond our little, is not dead impassive fate nor force, but life, thought, order, beneficence—God. There is the true refuge

for us. It is not ourselves and our little working alone in this mighty world.

I like that story we used to be told when we were children, of some man who was sitting sorrowful, troubled because he feared that when he was gone, his work would all fall through and be lost. 'Master,' said his servant to him, 'Master, who took care of this world, before you came into it?'

'Surely, God!'

'And can you not trust Him then, to take care of it when you are gone out of it?' That is the whole of it! To-day is ours—partly. To-morrow is,—whose?

Why, think how wonderfully, through all the measureless cycles of the past, all has kept moving on. Begin with chaos, if you will, but chaos, then, must be alive with forces of order and seeds of beauty, still working on together towards growth and life and good. What forces are these, in earth and sea, and the vast incalculable starry spaces which hold all things together, from the comet whirling on four hundred miles a second, to the tiny seeds that are falling from the flowers in the waste places of the world—forces that seem alive with meaning and purpose—forces that not only work for physical growth and order, but some of them for moral growth and order, that 'have made for righteousness' as Matthew Arnold put it,—forces that no word but 'God,' or some

such word as 'God,' could name. It is this thought of Him, this trust in his mighty working, that is the true refuge from our useless anxieties. We do not know how He is working, certainly we have no idea that He will work just our way, but we do know that somehow He is working right. And our wisdom is to put in our little part, as those who feel that the larger, further working out of all things is with Him. This is the secret of that trust which Wordsworth so beautifully touches in his description of Old Matthew in 'the Excursion':—

'A man he was of cheerful yesterdays  
And confident to-morrows.'

We know not what a day, or an hour sometimes may bring forth,—but we do know that, if we are in the line of the laws of being and the will of God, all things must work right for us. There is no cunning foresight which leads so surely towards a good future as a faithful present.

## VI.

### ON 'SUPPLYING OTHER PEOPLE'S LACK OF SERVICE.'

*'For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.'* (Philippians ii. 30.)

It was a certain Epaphroditus of whom Paul wrote this, and who had 'come nigh unto death' to supply some lack of service on the part of these Philippians. They seem to have promised Paul some help, and then to have fallen behind with it. It is an interesting glimpse into those old times. Paul was at Rome, a prisoner, and though he had been put in the highest grade, and was allowed to live at large in his own hired house, yet it was with one of the Roman soldiers constantly chained to him, so that though he could talk or preach, he was helpless for working. He could no longer fall back on tent-making for his support; and lodgings were dear at Rome, so that he had to let the churches help him. These Philippians had been eager in promising to do

this. But somehow the collection got driven later than it should have been ; and so when Epaphroditus was at last sent off with their contribution, he seems to have felt that he must try to make up for lost time—did in a few weeks a journey that in the slow ancient travelling usually took months, and so threw himself into an illness. I have no doubt Epaphroditus's judicious friends blamed him ! Why should he go and risk his health because some other people had not done their part ? Paul thought otherwise. When he sends him back with this letter he says, ' Receive him in the Lord with all gladness,—and hold such in reputation '—and this was what he had to be held in reputation for,—that he was one who tried to supply other people's lack of service !

' Supplying other people's lack of service.' To me this always seems a very suggestive expression. I feel as if it touched the very heart of Christian happiness. You see, it goes deeper in than the phrase, 'doing good,' or even than 'loving' people. It singles out a kind of doing good which is the hardest of all to do patiently. We like to do good ; but we like to do it freely, we like to pick out our own way of doing it. Especially we like to do it as a sort of extra. If there is a poor sick friend whom you would like to help, you would much sooner send him to the seaside than pay up his arrears of rent for him. So we like to help the strong and capable rather than

the weak and shiftless. Business men know how it is. Shew them a man who has made a good brave fight, won a place by character and ability, and if such a man meets with sudden misfortune, and gets into a tight place, there is no limit to what they will do for him, and they will feel a real pleasure in doing it. But as for helping the weak, making up for their shortcomings, doing what they ought to have done and haven't, in a word, 'supplying their lack of service,' that is a different matter. You may do it, you constantly have to do it, but you cannot take any pleasure in it,—nay there are many really kind people, who feel as if this is more than they ought to be expected to do; they are willing to do good, but they do not like being driven into a corner, and having it left for them to do. They say, and very truly, that everybody ought to do his own work, that it is quite burden enough to render one's own service, without having also to make up for other people's lack of service. Their idea of what the world ought to be, is, a state of things in which every one should do his own part and all work in fairly together,—and then Christianity should come in to prevent things going wrong, and to make things better still by a spirit of mutual kindness all round. That is some people's idea of the world as it ought to be. Only, unfortunately it is not so. Well,—various philosophers, from Empedocles to Auguste Comte, have

thought that if they had had to create the world, there were several matters in which they could have improved upon the present pattern. And sometimes people are tempted to something of the same feeling by all the perplexities and contradictoriness of this world of human life. Only, it is of no use troubling ourselves with such wishes. Our science has to accommodate itself to the material world as it is, and so has our Christianity to the human world. And here, among the fundamental, irrepressible facts of the human universe, is this diversity of gifts and powers among men, and of their will to use their gifts and powers even if they have them ;—this 'lack of service' on the part of some, and this need for trying to supply that 'lack of service' by others! It is of no use wishing it were otherwise; it is worse than useless trying to act as if it was otherwise. Look where you will, the facts are so. They meet you when you first enter upon life. I remember when I was young—how one of the first bitter-nesses of childhood was having to put away the playthings that other children had left lying about, or to shut the door when somebody else had left it open. And that hard fate pursues us all through life! Everywhere the way of life is littered with the neglects and incapacities of others, and at every turn are the doors that thoughtless people have left open, and that the thoughtful ones have to shut! It is so at home



and abroad, in workshop and store, in private life and in public life. It is this which necessitates most of the functions of government and nearly all the efforts of philanthropy. Our charities, which we would like to be adding touches of extra beauty to the world, have to be all the time busied with patching up the lapses and deformities of some one's shortcomings.

So, friends, this is what we have to face. 'Ye have your calling, brethren!' If we are to have any better, earnest thought about living, if we want to have any part with the faithful helpful ones of the world—the beginning of it lies in this:—in going into life from its beginning, and all through with a quick eye and a ready hand and a willing heart to 'supply other people's lack of service.'

There are, however, two objections to this theory of life which are apt to arise—one philosophical, the other practical; and I must say a few words about these.

The philosophical objection is this: that it is a mere conceit of man's self-consciousness to suppose that he has anything to do with supplying any one else's 'lack of service,' or doing any part but just his own. Those who believe in the philosophy of self-care and self-development put it, that the simple function of everything in creation is, to be itself, to fulfil its own part. But this is not so, in the limiting sense which it is quoted to bear. The very opposite is the case.

Everything in nature finds its perfect function, not within itself, but in supplying something lacking to the things about. Everywhere the beautiful whole is produced, not by a number of smaller wholes developing in self-centred completeness side by side, but by their developing in a curiously inwoven and overlapping life, the strong making up for the weak, those which remain supplying the place of any that fail. You cannot break a branch off a tree but all the branches about begin to 'supply its lack of service' by shoots which grow into the vacant place. If you lose your sight, straightway your touch and hearing begin to grow curiously acute, making up for the lost sense, supplying its 'lack of service.' You say nature does this by unerring law. True, but who makes the law? It does not indicate any thought on the part of the tree; no, but doesn't it indicate any thought on the part of the tree's maker? What we call laws, do nothing; they are simply our name for some regular way in which we find the mighty force back of all things, and in all things, working. And those ways in which the divine force works are the ways for us to work. One purpose, one spirit runs through all things—only, while nature fulfils the divine idea by unconscious movement or growth, man is left to fulfil it by his conscious will, by setting it before himself. There is the help of seeing what nature does in this matter of supplying the lack of service

of a broken bough or a lost sense. It may help us, at any rate, to feel that this having to 'supply others' lack of service' is not a special hardship upon us.

Job says, 'eyes was I to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.' And Christianity, in its finer scope of love, carries out the same idea more fully, and not only would have us be 'eyes to the blind,' but with just as tender patience—Wisdom to those who seem to us foolish ; capacity to the incapable ; strength to those who are weak. You see, it is God's calling to us in nature, as well as his call in Christianity to try, as the very principle of life, to be in the world, as Christ was, as those 'that serve,' and especially to supply each other's lack of service.

But still, when this philosophical objection is settled, there is apt to arise a practical one. It is apt to seem as if the idea of doing the undone work of others must involve some slighting of our own. Now, we do not want any risk of that. There is too much of that already. We all know the kind of busybody philanthropy, and also of busybody public spirit which neglects home and diffuses itself over all sorts of tasks for others, and in fact can mind everybody's business except its own. Of course there is not a word to be said for that ; but the true 'supplying of other's lack of service' grows out of quite a different thing. It is not the minding of other's business instead of

one's own, but the coming to understand how in reality one's own business does not stop with self, but has a part in the general good. Let me show you what I mean : You know, there is such a thing as looking—at whatever you have part in—as a whole, and trying to make it go—go well. It does not matter what—a home, a business, a church,—any common enterprise. Each individual in any one of these things has a certain little part of his **own**. It is his first business to do this, to do it well to its uttermost. But, if he be a true man, he will not be able to confine his whole thought and interest to that. He will not be able to go on turning his own little wheel, however duly and blamelessly, and feeling that so long as he does that, the rest may be standing still or working all wrong—but that it is no concern of his. He feels concern for the whole. From the post where he turns his individual wheel he looks interestedly on the whole machine of which it is part, and if there is anything going wrong, in which, without his own part stopping, he can put in a hand to set things right, he does it.

That is the true thing—not only the Christian thing, for it is just that, but it is the secret of all success in the work of the world. The secret of leadership, mastership, of anything more than grinding on at one little wheel to the end, is, in the eye to take in the whole working of many parts together, and the hand to put in a little help here

or there, wherever it seems needed. If there only be, as well as eye and hand, the heart to do this patiently and willingly, with good-will not only to the work but to the workers in it, the heart tolerant of their weakness and defects, trying to keep them all up to the mark, but doing it helpfully, not masterfully,—then I think we come at one of the world's very noblest characters.

Now this is what we should all have in our minds to be, and try to be. Look at it where you will, it is inexpressibly worthful and helpful. It infuses into all this complex whole of human doings at once a new standard of strictness, and at the same time a new element of patience, and a new stimulus of grateful love.

Look at it in life's innermost part. What a pleasant gracious thing, this spirit of being willing to supply other's lack of service is in a home. There will always be plenty of lack of service there! Such a multitude of little details go to make up a happy, smooth-going, efficient home! And those details in so many hands, amongst which there are sure always to be some weak ones and some perverse ones. And there is that inevitable tendency in things to get left about—they get into all sorts of wrong places by accident, but they never get into the right places by accident; and doors will be left open; and there is that stock difficulty of getting things done promptly to time. Plenty of scope in all this for

supplying other people's 'lack of service.' How is it all to come right? Well, you know how there are some homes where they try to have it right by having an inquest over every little thing that is wrong—with much cross-examination to settle exactly how much A, B, and C are to blame for it. And there are families where they seem to sit in a perpetual court of chancery, trying to settle the exact bounds of each other's work and duty, and who ought to do this, and whose business that is. Friends, the problem of a happy, efficient home is not to be settled that way. The only real way is to do all one's own part, and that on the largest interpretation of it—and whatever helpful thing comes in one's way besides. What a joy and grace it is, what an influence of peace and patience, when in a busy household there is even one of this kind:—a mother who moves among her children and about her house, with watchful eye and quiet willing hand, to take up the dropt stitches of the household order, and help things, here and there, to go pleasantly and smoothly. Or, it may be one of the younger ones, who sees the burden that the elders bear, and tries in many a quiet way of helpfulness to ease it a little for them, and to make things 'go' with that sweetness and readiness which make a happy home such a place as there is not on earth beside!

Does not the same thing apply in the busy doings of the world? There has to be more

strictness there, I know. I am not preaching that incapacity is always to be bolstered up, or indolence, or want of interest, or carelessness to be borne with for ever. Nothing of the kind! Yet at the same time, you who are more familiar with the business of the world than I am, know that there is abundant scope every day for carrying out something of this helpful thought of supplying others' lack of service. You are connected with various people in your work,—joint managers, partners, members of the same committee—fellow-workers—and so on : do not you know what it is to 'take hold' very earnestly yourself, with a compelling sense of responsibility, and to find that others, whom you think ought to feel just as you do, do not, take it quite too easily, so that you feel as if you had to do all your own share of the work and part of theirs into the bargain?—'supplying their lack of service.' I know it is hard. This is the cross of strong, capable men,—the cross is to bear this cheerfully, not fuming and fretting, and feeling as if there was something wrong about the world. Because there is nothing wrong. It is only that there are differences of strength and capacity—and if you are one of the strong and capable ones, be thankful—and do your extra share willingly and patiently.

And this is the spirit that is needed not only in the home and in the work-a-day world, but also in our churches and all their efforts to do good.



Why, the whole meaning of all this working to make things in God's world a little better, lies in this thought of lacking 'service,' and in trying in Christ's spirit to make up some of it. And so we should not be discouraged because so much of this helping work—has to be spent on weak and incapable and sometimes shiftless and sinful ones. Who else should we help? 'They that are well need not the physician.' The strong, the wise, don't need helping. Nor should we be discouraged because it is slow work, and sometimes fails! You business men make bad debts now and then. Are we to have no 'bad debts' in our philanthropy?

And in doing this—the same thing comes in—all will not do their part—and so the others have to do the more! All through God's world—the same! Well—take it willingly; be glad if you can do the more! That is God's calling to us, in all that mercy which does not measure itself by our desert, and all that infinite patience which bears with us through life's weak, poor, faulty years, and even to the most fitful love gives back such rich full blessing!

And Christ's calling, too,—was it his own share only that he carried in his burdened heart, and bore on Calvary? So does he call us to be in the world 'as those that serve'; in the home, at work, in the church, in every task of doing good, not to be waiting for others, or counting just what may be our share—but to do promptly, lovingly

the most we can,—ready to supply whatever service seems most lacking—strength, where things go feebly, wise thought where sense is wanted, money where money is needed, a little oil of kindness where life works with too much friction—so to help all things in our little corner of God's world to go more smoothly and righteously and happily,—a little more like heaven!

## VII.

### ‘PATIENT CONTINUANCE IN WELL-DOING.’

*‘To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality—eternal life!’ (Romans ii. 7.)*

I CANNOT help thinking that this very phrase, with the position that it holds in Christian thought, is a sign of one of the noblest characteristics of Christianity. Christianity has brought out, as no other system ever did, the beauty and worth of simple, faithful living, apart from any greatness or conspicuousness. That simple kind of life was not of much account in the ancient world. The ancient world’s idea of ‘glory, honour, and immortality,’ was of reward for the conspicuously great. He who should do some striking act of heroism, or some noble service to his country, for him, certainly—immortality! A Hercules, slaying the lion or dragon that had become the terror of a whole tribe; a Leonidas, dying at the head of the forlorn hope of Greece; a Curtius,

leaping into the chasm that superstition whispered could never close till Rome's best treasures were cast into it—no doubt about immortality for these, or such as these,—ancient thought followed them to heaven and fancied them dwelling among the gods or changed into shining stars. But there was no idea of anything of this kind for the rank and file of the common people. The husbandmen of the Campanian fields, who through those old-world centuries had to delve and plough, and take their corn to market, and live busy days about their farms; the merchants, who at Tyre or Corinth had to buy and sell, and try and make a little profit here and there; the women, who, in the inner chambers of those ancient houses, had to pass their days in the thousandfold little cares of home and children—these—let alone the myriads, humbler yet, of hired labourers or slaves,—well, of course such work had to be done, such classes had to be, but as to their being of any account with the gods, or as to any 'glory, honour, and immortality' being in store for them, that hardly entered men's minds! There, exactly, it was that the elevating power of Christ's religion came in so strikingly and beautifully. It touched human life even in its homeliest levels with a new self-respect. It inaugurated a kind of divine democracy. It gave to the lowliest a new hope, a new encouragement. The Gospel's teaching of the great heavenly Father, as near to the labourer

in the sand quarries as to the priest in the temple, and loving every one of these toiling ones,—not merely beneficent to mankind in the mass, but knowing them and loving them soul by soul, as a father knows his children; and the Gospel's great practical illustration of that divine love in a Christ who had especially gathered poor men about him, to teach them and inspire them with his glorious hopes; yes, and the whole tone of Christ's teachings, dwelling so tenderly on the work, and cares, and temptations of the common world, taking his parables from hired men, and vinedressers, and busy women at their sweeping or their baking—all this was what really took hold of the heart of mankind. It is when I think of all this, that Paul's saying—'patient continuance in well-doing'—looks grandest to me. It stands out not as a mere fragmentary text, but as almost the very watchword for the Christian life, and rich with such a large, appreciative hopefulness for the common race of men.

For see! When you take the world's life in its broad commonplace doings, what a great deal of 'patient continuance in well-doing' there is. I know there is plenty to be said on the other side. Everywhere some speck and taint of sin—selfishness, and meanness, and flaws of ill-done work; often terrible sin—hardly a day but one has to read of crimes in this common world that make one's heart faint and sick. And yet even

at the worst showing, shall we regard the world, after the old fashion, as all peopled with a ruined, doomed race, ready to topple over into hell, and with no good, no hope, except in the one-in-a-thousand of the earth's myriads who can be counted as converted and saved? The more I look abroad over earth's lands and peoples, the more I mingle with all sorts and conditions of men, the more does any such estimate seem a libel alike on man and on God.

I like rather to look abroad in the light of this large word of Paul's about 'glory, honour, and immortality' waiting for 'patient continuance in well-doing.' It sets me thinking of all the nameless myriads, in many and many a land from the snows to the tropics, who year in year out keep doing the work the world's great Lord has given for men to do, and—according to their kind—doing it well. It makes me think how much there is of this in the life of a single great city, how much of steadfast holding to unloved tasks, and standing grimly to painful duties, and of plodding fulfilment of dull routine, and of fighting the battle of life often with little expectation of winning, but still fighting it through! Does all that count for nothing with the great father-life that has caused all this to be? I love to feel that, on the contrary, it all has part in the promise of that word about 'patient continuance in well-doing.' I think there is the strong root and

beginning of nobler life in it, that some day the voice that divides the sky shall have for these some 'well done good and faithful servants'; and it is inexpressibly helpful to think of that greater world in which such life lives on, comes to fuller development, rises to some happier place and part in the working out of the eternal years.

I think all this is on Paul's saying, enfolded in it if not actually expressed in it, and I like to think of it, it makes one feel more trustful about the world. And yet Paul certainly had in his mind something more conscious and personal than this more purposed and definite well-doing. It was not this mere inarticulate goodness and inarticulate religion that he had before him, but something more of distinct moral purpose and effort. He was thinking of the distinct taking up of the Christian life, and holding right on to it. He was thinking of those who had taken it up, and of how hard they would sometimes find it, and how tempted they would be to let it go, and he wanted to encourage them by telling them how, just there, lay all the promise of blessedness and glory, in steadily keeping on, not letting go, not just working by fits and starts, but keeping on with that beautiful quality — 'patient continuance!'

Oh friends, I wish I had the power to set before you the infinite blessedness of these two things, the definite taking up of the purpose of a Christia



life, and of this patient continuance in it. I am struck with this every day—how much Christianity there is all about the world and in all sorts of people, but so much of it is fitful and not steadfastly reliable. I seem to meet with such numbers of people who have a good deal of Christianity about them—Christian thoughts in their minds and Christian feelings in their hearts—and, if you happen to take them just there, they will respond, do this or that good thing,—come out, often, with surprising flashes of goodness—and still they have no settled purpose about it. So there is too much mere tinkering at life, trying to be a little more Christian in this or that, but without any real trying for a Christian life right along. People think with themselves, when some strong aspect of Christianity comes home to them—they think—‘ this is not quite as it should be, I must alter ’ ; or, ‘ that wants mending in my life ’ ; they try to lop off a bad habit here, or to patch in an act of kindness there—but so few seem to take up the distinct purpose of a real life of well-doing, and to set that before themselves, and then steadily try to keep on in it. That is the beautiful thing—the life that is deliberately set towards the right ; which though perhaps without any great rhapsodies of feeling, can always be relied on, is always there ; without any great brilliancy of power, is kind and good and true.

I would like to recall some illustrations of it,

and yet it is difficult, because the characters which hold the memory of the world are almost necessarily those which have some special gift or power, or else some special work ; while the point I want to illustrate is, the value of simple life that has nothing special, not any great doing, but only well-doing. Yet I suppose that here and there in life we all come upon some whom we either know or know of, who do typify this to us. They are of no one rank or class. This 'patient continuance in well-doing' is the one thing that is possible alike for rich or poor. Christ said : 'It is hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God'—meaning, not hard to get to heaven, but precisely to enter into that present kingdom which he was trying to set up among men,—that is this very life I am speaking of, of set Christian purpose and patient continuance in it. And so it is hard ! But it may be done ; and when a rich man does enter into that, and keeps in it, and lives out the life of a true-hearted, conscientious, Christian gentleman,—there is something very noble in it.

I dare say every one of us has in our heart instances full of this special characteristic—silent, effective people always to be relied upon, or busy active lives full of a cheery helpfulness and steadfast in all sorts of little works and cares which go to make the world a little happier ; and whose names are remembered among those who knew

them with a tender reverent honour which is more than laurel wreath or sculptured monument.

When one looks at such illustrations of 'patient continuance in well-doing,'—it seems so simple and within everyone's reach, that one feels as if it should be one of the commonest of virtues—why is it not ?

I suppose the natural craving for novelty and change has much to answer for. It is so hard to keep putting fresh spontaneous effort into the well-worn round of work. Hence, so much of the world's well-doing is by fits and starts. I have heard an English summer irreverently described as 'three fine days and a thunderstorm.' There is a good deal of what passes for man's well-doing which is about of this kind,—especially the thunderstorm. This is the kind of virtue that is apt to come of 'revivals.' I do not mean that the feeling is not genuine at the time—it is ; but it is terribly apt to die down.

Only, let it be remembered that this is no special failing in religion. There is just as much of it in city life, and politics, and everything else. I hear city men rail at religious revivals, but do they manage much better with political revivals ? I have seen great meetings of citizens to inaugurate some new movement of popular advancement or reform,—meetings at which there was quite as exciting talk as ever I heard at a revival and more shouting,—meetings that were vaunted in the

newspapers as inaugurating a new régime of patriotism and public spirit ! But what sort of a muster is there a month afterwards when any real work has to be done ?

And all our institutions have the same experience. Who do the work by which our hospitals, our asylums, all the beneficent institutions about us are kept going ? All those chairmen and vice-chairmen and directors and committees, men and women whose names stand in such imposing lists on the front page of the annual reports ? Nothing of the kind ! Those are people who will help at a pinch—they may come out quite strong at an annual meeting or a fancy fair—but, for the quiet underground work—that is everywhere kept going by a faithful few who can always be relied on, who are always at their posts, who do not tire,—yes, they do,—they tire just like everybody else and feel out of heart sometimes and ready to give up,—only they don't give up—they hold on in spite of their tiredness :—that is the beautiful grace of 'patient continuance in well-doing.'

Only one word more, about how to have it. I believe that in this, of all things, the one surest help is in religion, a deep quiet faith, and its reminders in these recurring pieties. We want something more than our own intermittent force. Self can do something ; force of will, the love of praise, the wish to stand well with those around us, will often spur us on to special effort or to

the duty of some conspicuous occasion. Yes,—but for the common daily wear and tear, to meet the cares and duties of each day even when the heart is sick and the head tired—to keep patient and kind through all confusion and worry, and to be the helpful friend of all around—ah! for this we need something deeper than our own strength, and higher than any of the incitements from without—something above ourselves. There is the help of God, and of these old Bible words of strength in God—and of Christ's meek, kindly patience, and of these recurring times of worship which bring us the reminding of these things, and of such definite renewals of our purpose as this communion, and of all the secret refuge of thankfulness and prayer that may be at all hours. Here is the help which religion has in it—but has in it specially when it is not a mere occasional refuge but life's chosen and settled purpose. Let it be this—and then it is the help which most of all can keep the life true through all trials, ready in all duty, constant in well-doing—and, to use Goethe's great similitude, 'not hurrying and not staying—like a star.'

VIII.  
THE KINGDOMS OF GOD THAT ARE  
AT HAND.

*'The Kingdom of God is at hand.'* (Mark i. 15.)

THAT old word, 'the Kingdom of God is at hand,' translated out of the local and temporary phrase into its everlasting spiritual equivalent, simply means that the true solid happiness and blessedness of life is close at hand. It is not something far off, only to be reached by great changes, or after years and years of effort, but is here, where we are, right under our feet.

You see the importance of this when you remember that it was the very key-note of Christ's 'good tidings.' For that was the essential meaning of 'the Kingdom of God is at hand!' We take these words too technically. 'The Kingdom of God' was simply the Hebrew form of that universal dream of some far-away blessedness. The Greek form of it was 'the golden age,' away in the distant past. It is significant of the deeper moral impulse of Hebrew life, that it was ever

looking onward; its 'Kingdom of God' lay ahead. Our modern phrase, 'the good time coming,' means a good deal the same, but nowhere in history does that tendency gather to quite such a striking point as in that national hope of the Jews. You know the Jews had been for centuries looking onwards. Their hope had been crystalizing more and more into the belief in a great national deliverance which should make them the empire people of the world.

This was the idea, the hope, in the midst of which Jesus grew up. He had heard it from his childhood. It was the talk of the elders in the synagogue, of the labourers in the vineyards, of the fishermen as they sat mending their nets. The wise star-gazers of the East, the very shepherds on the Syrian plains, could hardly see an unusual light in the sky, without thinking that it must be the sign of the birth of the Deliverer, and of the coming of the Kingdom.

And his thought, or rather, as he felt it with ever deepening force—God's thought, given him to speak to his people, was simply this: that all the while that they were looking onwards, to mighty changes, for their Kingdom of God—the real thing was there, close at hand, within their reach at any hour! They were crying 'How long, O Lord, how long—when will the Lord turn to us again?' And all the while he was with them, as every sparrow and lily might tell them,



if they only had ears to hear ! They were searching the Prophets to find out when God was going to be gracious, and all the while he was being gracious to them every day of their lives ! This was the sum and substance of his gospel—the divine happiness possible to his people—and to all mankind—if they would only turn lovingly to God and to each other, and live the kind, dutiful life of true children of the Heavenly Father.

It seemed a mockery to the Jews. That was why they more than once tried to kill him, and at last did kill him. And yet it was true—true even for them, dreadfully as they bemoaned their fate. The Jews had the materials of very happy, noble life as a people—had them right ‘at hand !’ A race of curious ability and intensity ; a good fertile land ; such a religion as no other people in the world had—immense resources of a good human lot. And even the subjection to imperial Rome, which seemed to them to poison all, was not so bad. We know what it was in ancient Britain. It was not a galling tyranny. It was tolerant because of its irresistible strength. The Jews had never been so well governed for centuries. But it all went for nothing ! The Jews were ‘the irreconcilables’ of the Roman Empire. They could see no good in their lot—only a dull submission to what seemed the curse of God, and a fierce silent waiting for a Messiah to lift off the


curse, set their feet on the necks of their enemies, and bring in the long anticipated glory.—Well, was not Christ's word, the very word they really needed? Oh, if they could only have been persuaded to see that Kingdom which was at hand—the possibilities of good, happy life just where they were. And especially if they could have been persuaded to see the glorious blessing of that old Monotheistic faith of theirs, as Christ was re-interpreting it—a blessing that the world was dumbly waiting for—why, what a grand destiny of national life might have been theirs—such a 'Kingdom of God' as should have shone all through history.

Instead, we have only the lesson. But it is a great lesson! A lesson for peoples, a lesson for individuals. I have no idea of condemning all great movements of peoples—all revolutions, and political uprisings, and struggles for justice, or for independence. To do so would be to condemn the most heroic half of history. And yet how all this has been overdone!

Changes, in government and law, may constantly be needed, and may sometimes be so needed as to justify resort to force—but it must never be forgotten that such changes can at most only remove some hampering fetters—and that the real welfare of peoples comes by life-growth, by industry, and forethought, and education, and the silent working of morals and religion. Even

in its larger aspect—for whole peoples—‘ the Kingdom of God ’ (that bright hope of welfare for which patriots long), is generally close at hand, if they could but see it !

But it is in individual and personal life that the lesson comes perhaps most closely home. People are always looking for their Kingdoms of God far away. There is always a visionary kingdom glowing in some dim distance of hope or fancy. Your schoolboy reads ‘ Robinson Crusoe,’ or Mayne Reid’s stories of wonderful adventure, till it seems stupid and dull to be living at home, with regular meals and beds to sleep in, and he muses about some possible desert island or far-off wilderness where life might be passed, chiefly in going about with a gun. Men laugh at that—yet are they so much better ? Their kingdoms are more prosaic and substantial, but men are just as liable to miss those that are close to them in looking for those which are far away and utterly problematical. This man has a longing to be at the head of his profession. He is just in the rank and file of it and he wants to make a name. If he could do this, he could sing ‘ nunc dimittis ! ’ Thus another man, again, likes power—has a faculty for organization ;—to him it seems as if it would be the very ‘ kingdom of God ’ to become the leader of his party, or to attain some high position in the country. This man has a craving to make some striking discovery

in science ; that to write a successful book ; the other to paint the best picture of the year. 

In these days when so many of the kingdoms of success are entered by golden keys, I suppose that most of these visionary kingdoms of God shape themselves into the desire to get wealth—not for its own sake, I do not mean anything so small as that, but for the sake of the great things that may be done with it. You know that is a thing of every day. ‘Enough’ has been defined as ‘a little more than one has.’ And that is what it means to many people, to the end. The millionaire sees the chance of another million or so. The merchant, with already on his back enough responsibility for three men, sees another opening. And so they launch out into new enterprises—which means that they incur new responsibilities, and load heart and brain with new anxieties and cares. They do it honestly,—I’m not supposing the case of bad people—but they turn life into a weary grind. Their best years pass by, and still they are at it, as hard or harder than ever. They cannot slacken yet, they tell you—too much depends on them—but when they get into their kingdom of accomplished success, then they mean to rest and enjoy life, and do a little quiet happy living. Perhaps they succeed ; perhaps they fail. Many die just as their success begins to come ; like Moses they just climb to the top of the hill and look over into their promised

land, but never enter it. I think this is one of the most pathetic things in this eager life of the world,—the number who only grasp the object for which they have given life's intensest power, to find it dropping from their nerveless hands. But take those who succeed. You see here and there men who by this absorbing struggle have raised themselves to such a position as in their earlier years they hardly ever dreamed of, have actually come into what they thought would be a very kingdom of heaven to them. Well, how does it feel? Does it seem so now? Nine out of ten of them will tell you that they are not any really happier than they used to be. Some even feel like Solomon, when he had builded his houses, and got him servants and serving men, and silver and gold—'and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit!' They have waited, and striven, and prayed (with their hands at least), for this 'kingdom to come,' and when it is come, it is only just like all the rest of their life before. Nay, if you come across them in quiet hours, and set them talking about the sweetest happiness they have ever known, you, often, find their hearts twining with fondest, lingering pleasure to earlier days, when they lived in some quite humble way, and knew what it was to be pinched and poor.

And all the time, while men are setting their hearts on these far-off kingdoms, giving life's best thought and most strained care to reach them—

all the while there is that voice—so calm, so often drowned amid the stir and din of life, yet sounding ever quietly on for those who have ears to hear—‘the Kingdom of God is at hand!’ Men are trying to discern it on ahead of them—they are wondering if they have not somehow gone by it in the past—and all the time it is waiting for them close at hand. It is waiting, in the happiness which might be even in the humblest present actual lot if men would only make the best of it.

Why, what a kingdom of Heaven home may be—and yet how many people find it only tame and dull. They go outside of it for pleasure! There are plenty of people to whom the idea of staying at home, just with their own family, seems as if it did not count! And the joy of children. Oh, parents, make the most of them, now, while they are little! They will so soon be gone, gone out of their childhood! Spend more time with them! Why, there are some homes where the father hardly sees his little ones except when they are in bed! They do not know what sweet companionship, what tender restfulness they might find with them. ‘Of such is the Kingdom of God’ is not a word merely for the future heaven, but for that Kingdom of God which Christ said was close at hand, here!

And so it is with friendship. What a ‘kingdom’ true friendship is! Why, life rises to almost its

loftiest height, of happiness at any rate, in full rich friendship. As Emerson says: 'friendship' is 'a serious and majestic affair, like a royal presence, or a religion; and not a postillion's dinner, to be eaten on the run!' But how many do take it just so—'on the run.' How seldom they let themselves really have the good of their friendships! Now and then they have an evening with some old friend they used to know well, and they take up the old feeling where they left off, and their hearts glow with the happy time they have—and they part, saying 'we must see each other oftener!' But then life goes on as before.

But now, how is it all to be? How are we to realize this happiness close about us, this 'kingdom of God' which is 'at hand'? Is there any practical help for us?

The one thing which lies at the root of the whole matter is—to take life a little more quietly. At present we take it as if it were a railroad journey and the object were—to get to the end of it! How can we enjoy the beauties of the way? Have you never noticed, in travelling by rail, here and there in a valley or a wood, little spots of exquisite beauty? A tiny glen, with its trickling rill and moss-covered stones—or some grassy glade, shadowed by noble trees, that seemed just made for a resting place through the long summer afternoon—a little spot where you longed to get off the train, and sit down, and take it all in—but



no! you only just flashed by it, forty miles an hour! Is not that a parable of how we hurry by these sweet, restful experiences of which we now and then get glimpses in the joys of home and friendship, and the children's hour? Yes, it is hard to say how it is to be done, but taking life more quietly is one condition of finding the happiness that there may be in it as we go along.

Another condition is to ask oneself about the place one is in, the question: 'What can I do for my fellow-creatures here? What can I do to make those about me better or happier?' For there is no place where you cannot do something, and that is the way to life's best happiness. All life, centred in self, keeps growing smaller—its very pleasures pall—its brightness fades. But all life looking out—linking itself with other people's joys and interests, sharing their joys, helping them in their troubles—all that life keeps growing larger! It is surprising how the worth of even the poorest lot opens out when you begin to reckon, as part of the assets and advantages, what you can do for others there.

And that leads right on to the last word I have to say, which is that after all the greatest condition of finding the happiness which is close about us is that which the text suggests—not merely to take life quietly, but to look at it as the Kingdom of God. Oh friends,—I am more and more persuaded that the real secret of happy effective

living is—to look out on life in a thankful, trustful, religious spirit, owning God's presence in it, and God's will—the spirit of this simple religion of Jesus Christ ! There is no realm of all this varied world that does not take on a new beauty in the light of God.

But it is in this life of ours that it brings the greatest beauty to look to Him, and to see his light shining through life's various experience—through its joys and sorrows,—its cares, its toils, its strain, its uncertainty. For then, life's mercies come as his gifts ; we feel our trials his will and take them kindly and patiently ; we do our work—or try to do it—as our part in the great Father's busy world ; and even when work is most froward and there can be no slackening, we know what it is to have—

‘ A central peace subsisting at the heart  
‘ Of endless agitation ! ’

All this is what Christ longed for men to know—man's common life—just as it was then, just as it is now—only, lived in the felt light and love and will of God,—all this is ‘ the Kingdom of God ! ’ And this is what is ‘ at hand ! ’ It waits for no change of place or time ! Look round you where you are, open your eyes to see it, and your heart to feel it—and it is there ! You might have it in a two-roomed cottage ; you may have it in the lordliest mansion. You can take it with you into the dirtiest office, or on the

loneliest journey. For 'the Kingdom of God' is something that you do take with you, a little bit of heaven, a nameless influence of a thankful, kindly, trustful spirit that makes the world better unawares like a glint of sunshine!

And it is at hand ; within one step of us—within one step of earnest purpose and resolute endeavour! It is here in the common things about us, here, in life's capacity for beauty, kindness, joy ; here in home, and friends, and even in the associations of the work-a-day world, which all are rich in the possibilities of kind and happy life! Yes, everywhere the Kingdom of God is 'at hand' to every one of us!—and only learn the meaning of this, and it will lead us into the blessed secret of that still deeper word—'the Kingdom of God is within.'

## IX.

### GAINING LIFE BY LOSING IT.

*‘Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.’ (Matt. xvi. 25.)*

THESE words are a philosophy in a sentence. They are the Christian philosophy of life. Not for one’s own sake, but for some one else’s sake : that is the key to life’s highest good according to the Christian system. Not by thinking how I can get, or save, or keep the highest life shall I attain the highest life,—but by thinking of something else. Christ did not utter it as a philosophic thesis ; it simply came flashing out as a practical word for the coming days of persecution. What were they to do, when those days came, as come he knew they would ? Were they to be everlastingly scheming how to save their lives, how to escape suspicion, how to prevent people from thinking that they were Christians, how to avoid being actually put in prison or thrown to the lions ? Jesus knew that no good in the world could come of that sort of living. Lives so saved

would hardly be worth living. They would be weak, poor, timid lives. So his counsel always was: a brave, faithful outspokenness. Let them not be thinking how they should defend themselves. Say the true thing, do the right thing, and let life take care of itself. They might some of them lose their lives; well, life here is not the only life, is not even the chief life: 'Who-soever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it.' Better find that higher life beyond, than save a poor shamefaced life here.

That was the occasion and its special meaning. But Christ's sayings are always larger than the occasion. So, as I began by saying, this word,—a simple counsel of brave disregard of self in times of persecution is, really, the Christian philosophy of life in a sentence. The highest life by thinking of something else than your own life at all, of something else than yourself, than either of your own body or your own soul. That is how man shall attain the true life, by losing himself in something else.

Now this is apt to seem a contradiction and a paradox. Is not the first principle in doing anything, this:—to keep the thing steadily before you, and aim right at it? Is not this, then, a curious roundabout idea, this bidding man not think of self, when surely self is the one thing that finally concerns him? It seems a sort of getting at the true life round a corner, going

in one direction in order to come out into another. So it is apt—especially to those who pride themselves on taking practical views—to seem a mere self-delusion of amiable sentiment, with nothing really in it.

And yet it is not so. If you look into it closely you will see that it is not.

See ; it is true, that with respect to the work man has to do outside himself, the way to do it may be to keep it directly in view, aim consciously at it. But what I want you to notice is, that the moment you come to the working of mind or life in man himself, not merely in this higher life Christ speaks of, but in almost any part of our nature within ourselves, the opposite principle comes in—this very principle which seems so paradoxical—that losing the life, letting it go, not thinking of it, is the surest way of saving it.

Why, you see the truth of this every day, in such common things as the operations of mind and memory. You want the name of a person or a place. It is something you know perfectly well—you know it, you say, as well as you know your own name ! Yet you cannot bethink you of it ; no ! and the curious thing is, that the harder you try to recall it, the more it will not come. Dr. W. B. Carpenter records as an illustration of this, how, some years ago, a bank cashier lost the key of the safe. In the morning it was not to be found. The whole business was at a

standstill. What must be done ? He certainly had it the night before and put it somewhere, but where, he could not remember. A sharp detective was sent for, and when he had inquired into every circumstance connected with the matter, he said : ‘ the only way is for you to go home and think of something else.’ And the man did go home ; probably found it very hard to get interested in anything else ; but at last something attracted his attention, set him thinking in quite a different direction, and then, almost directly, it flashed up in his mind where he had put that key :—and all was right.

Take a higher operation of mind than mere memory. Did you ever try to cross a stream by some rather awkward stepping stones, or by a narrow plank ? Or have you tried to walk at some dangerous height, or to do anything requiring a particularly clear, steady head ? If you have, you know that it is to be done precisely by not thinking about it. If you begin looking down at the stepping stones, or at the water, or at the depth beneath you, and thinking about it and about how you shall manage it, you are lost ! Whereas, if you are so occupied thinking about something else, that you hardly notice the stepping stones, if you are on some errand in which you are so eager that you are not thinking of yourself,—that losing yourself is your safety ; you may go perfectly safely over places and heights,



that afterwards, when you do come to think about them, will make you dizzy to look at. There, too, life is safest by not thinking about saving it.

Take another matter—the preservation of health. One condition of keeping in good health, is, not to think about your health, but to be wholesomely occupied with quite other thoughts. Think about your health, begin feeling your pulse, watching your symptoms, considering all the things which might possibly be the matter with you, and you may think yourself into an illness. Why do physicians so often order ‘change of scene’ and something to distract the mind, but that the patient may be led to lose himself and so find the health which he could not gain while anxiously thinking of himself? And so when there is some epidemic about, how true you constantly see it that ‘he that will save his life shall lose it.’ The most dangerous thing of all, is, to be constantly thinking and scheming how to escape infection. Take reasonable precautions, indeed, especially such precautions as are demanded not just for your safety, but for the general safety,—but then go straight forward. Turn neither to the right hand nor to the left. Think of others, not of self; neither seek infection—for this is no counsel of rashness—nor shun it: and generally you will be safe. Not always; no; no more than those early Christians were always safe in persecution. Plenty of them

perished, and so in cholera or fever there is no immunity for the unselfish. But in this case also, as in that earlier time, it is a better, nobler life one finds by not thinking about saving it. Whereas the life that, when an epidemic is about, lives in perpetual quarantine, hardly dares come within a street's length of a friend, and would not for the world go into a house where they have it, not even to help one's nearest neighbour—why, it is a poor, timid life anyhow, all the spring and power gone out of it. Better, life handsomely lost than so meanly saved!

And so it is even in life's most tremendous crises and trials and perils. Why, those early disciples found Christ's words true. In those terrible days of persecution, when the Christian might at any hour be taken before some magistrate and have it put to him to say a word or two, cursing and denying Christ, or else to be thrown to the beasts in the amphitheatre, or put to any cruel torture that happened to have come in fashion,—they believed their master's words. They didn't worry themselves about saving life, and they did 'find' it. They found it even here—here, as Christ had said, 'a hundredfold, even with persecutions.' The life they had was a nobler, happier life because it was not occupied in thinking of its own safety, and when they lost it, why it was only to find it elsewhere. Yes! for these are the things which make us feel man's

immortality. It is not when I see men in a mad rush for safety ; it is not when I see men setting such store on the mere earthly life that they will sacrifice everything for it,—it is not then that I am most impressed with life's deathless quality, but just the opposite. And we may see that difference to-day. We are not liable to be persecuted to-day in that old fashion Christ was speaking of. It is not put to us, to be tortured or burned unless we will deny our faith. But the old ghastly alternative comes in its own ways. You never know in just what shape, any day or hour, it may come to you to be in some sudden, frightful danger,—and to have essentially that same choice,—whether in Christ's spirit you will try to do what you can for others, or whether you will just try anyhow to save yourself. And it is then, when men dare to be indifferent to life, that they most shew what an imperishable quality there is in life. When I read—and every week's newspapers have some instance of the kind, of those who in the wrecked ship, or the burning building are content to let life go in order to help others ; when I read of such brave men as that lifeboat crew the other day who pushed off into the raging sea, on their merciful errand, and the storm was so awful that their own boat was swamped and half of them were drowned ; or, when I recall such a story as that of the colliers in a pit only five miles from my old Lancashire

home—where in the terrible explosion the men from some lower levels came rushing right into the danger of the deadly after-blast when the only chance of escape was in a different direction, and one of the overlookers knew this, and stood his ground there in that dangerous passage warning back the men as they came rushing along, and when they urged him to go that other way with them, saying no, someone must stay there to warn the rest. Ah! these are the things that make you feel that immortality is real! For the moment you touch this—not self-preservation, but self-renunciation—you feel that there is something in such life of quite other sort than that gross matter which can be crushed, or burned, or drowned; something against which those brute substances and forces are as powerless as a sledge hammer against steam. Yes! It is then—not when man is writhing and scheming by any means to save his life, but when in the supreme crisis of some need of others, he lets it go as if it were not worth a thought—it is then I am most sure he will find his life again, find it as surely as you found this morning in your waking the life you lost last night in sleep,—find it in the eternal world, find it in some glorious heaven of God.

There, that is the full meaning, at its very highest, of Christ's words about 'whosoever will lose his life shall find it.' But in reality it is

applicable in a hundred lesser ways. It is, as I began by putting it, a philosophy of life : that the best life, the best power in any part of life, comes, not by thinking how you can get it, nor by thinking about yourself at all, but by losing yourself.

I know it seems a hard doctrine. The whole spirit of the common world rises up against it. 'We must look to ourselves,' men say. 'What will it profit us?' is the practical touchstone of common doings; and the same spirit is apt to creep into religion, too, till people who have been thinking for six days 'what will it profit us in this world,' can hardly get any higher on the seventh, than 'what will it profit us in the next world?' Yes. I know how natural this is, and I know that it has its place. I do not want to speak intolerantly or condemnatorily about self-interest. Self-interest, if it be not the highest thing, is one of the useful forces of the world. Self-interest has set man grappling with nature, has taught him the arts of self-protection, has trained him to dig and plant, and spin, and weave, has sent him sailing and discovering over the world, has raised the human race, it may be, from savagism to civilization. Yes, and it has all this, and this kind of thing, to do perpetually. Self-interest is one of the great, strong, permanent forces at the base of life. It is part of nature, but it is not the whole of nature, and it is not the highest

nature. Through these self-motives, more and more disciplined and restrained, man should be ever rising higher. The world's best life and work are always leading on to this higher quality in life and work, of losing self, forgetting self. The very things which begin with 'self' do not come to their best till self is lost, forgotten. If you only want to be a public speaker, well, you may begin your practising for it—perhaps you have to do—by thinking about yourself, but you will never come to any real eloquence till you have got away past that, till in some hour of passionate feeling you have forgotten yourself in your subject. The physician may study medicine in order to earn his own living, but he will be a poor doctor who does not by and by become so interested in his work, and in trying to heal his poor sick patients, that he constantly forgets himself. So with all the real excelling power in life. The real power to do any worthy thing in the world depends upon our loving that thing more than ourselves. The moment you rise to that, that moment your work takes on a higher quality. The merest hand-worker goes to work, for his own need, but he will find his work happier and do it better whenever he forgets his own interests in thinking of his employer's interest. In the same way an employer goes into business for his own self-interest. But he does not find his best life in that business till he loses himself in thought for

those about him in it. So it is throughout. To find life, you have to lose it, to forget it, to freely let it go! The highest, sweetest zest of life, is not in what we do thinking of self, but in what we do for others, forgetting self. It is so, even in the doing. How much more afterwards! Life passes on, years wane, strength fades. The shows and delusions of happiness wither and fall like autumn leaves. The only things that fade not, are those we do in simple, self-forgetting kindness to our fellow creatures, or in self-forgetting delight in God's great beautiful world, and the enthusiasm of doing some useful, helpful work in it.

That is the philosophy of Christ, and that is the secret of life. And it is something that all may have something of, even if they cannot rise—or think they cannot, to its full height. Perhaps you may feel like saying, 'Ah! that perfect unselfishness is out of our reach; it is not possible for us to forget ourselves so entirely as Christ seems to put it.' Well—but forget yourselves all you can; and every single time you do, your life will be a little better for it. Think of others, help others, give up your wish for others, be kind to others every way you can,—and every such thought and care and kindness, in which you unawares forget yourself, will be a little lifting up of life, and make it more worth living.

No! Christ's teachings are not impracticable nor unpractical. You may not be able to practise



them all at once. What is there in the world that you can do all at once? But they are the true light of life and their way is the way of all real blessing. And in no teaching of his does the blessing come sooner than in this of putting self aside and thinking of others. Be his disciple in this and it may begin by being a cross, but it will change into a crown! You may begin in some pain of self-denial, you will end in the quiet joy of self-forgetfulness. And so, more and more you will 'find' that higher life—yes, grow into it—in which our hearts go out lovingly to our fellow-men, and round towards all the beauty and glory of the world, and up towards God in whom is that deeper life which whoso lives with him, lives for ever!

## X.

### THE SERVICE OF PATIENCE.

*'In your patience possess ye your souls.'*

*(Luke xxi. 19.)*

My subject is the service of patience. Said John Milton, in that noble sonnet on his blindness, which kept him from so much that he would have liked to be doing in that stirring age,—

*'They also serve who only stand and wait.'*

Yes! The helpful power of life is not only in its active, stirring qualities. Patience, also, has its service in the make up of character, and the working out of the world's future. Rather a homely, despised sort of virtue, in this pushing, eager, self-asserting age;—nothing showy or demonstrative about it,—and yet it really has in it some of the finest and most potent qualities of life. For we must remember that patience, rightly understood, is not the mere spirit of meek endurance or passive waiting, which it is often represented as being—it is the whole spirit of

a thoughtful, prepared, deliberate life—looking beyond the hour, beyond the moment's struggle or the moment's pain, doing its part with a slow massive persistency, and then resting in that greater part that folds in our small doings, sure that out of this will eventually come right and blessing.

I will speak of patience in working first—because working is the staple of life—suffering its exception. One of the earliest things I can remember is my mother insisting that I must never cut the knot of a piece of string, but always patiently untie it. It was a dreadful cross—for every particularly interesting parcel—book, or present, or new thing—was sure to be tied with extra care and extra knots. But now—I would not have missed that training! It has saved me a great deal more than merely so many pieces of string. I don't say that I never cut a knot—but I never do so without a certain twinge of conscience, and a feeling that I am doing rather a mean thing. And, when I see a woman not just untying a knot, but perhaps unravelling a whole skein of silk or worsted that has got into a tangle—and so patient over it, where you my energetic friend would just rip it up—I cannot help wondering whether women's having had so much of that kind of work, all through the generations, has anything to do with their being so much more patient, generally, than men are.

And yet man's work needs patience, too! There is very little to be done in this busy world without patience. What patience is needed, to learn the commonest handicraft! Ah, it seems a long time, that five or seven years' apprenticeship;—but when I see a thoroughly trained artizan putting in his work with the clean stroke and the perfect instinct of where to apply it, acquired through those long patient years, I feel there is a good deal to be said for the old plan.

And the patience needed in business—I am struck with that, too. For a man to start in business, low down in its rank and file, and gradually master it, and then begin in it himself, and put his whole strength into it, struggle through its difficulties, weather its hard times, and at last build it up till it is a strong, steadily-working concern—why, what infinite patience that requires! Oh yes, I don't need to go to the Bible for examples of patience. This work-a-day world is full of them. Says Emerson: 'if there is any great and good thing in store for you, it will not come at the first or second call.' And he knew! It took twelve years to sell the first five hundred copies of his first work! And think of the patience which the watchers of science must have, to make anything of it, the countless multitudes of facts they have to note, and catalogue, and marshal into order, before they can be sure of any single step. And the trying,

and testing, and sometimes having to begin all over again! What patience has gone to the working out of the steam-engine—and now in the investigation of electricity! Think of the infinite patience that astronomers must have had to be able to track out the curve of a comet, for thirty years out into the great world spaces, and then back again! Or—that those chemists must have had before they finally caught some unaccounted-for two per cent. in their analysis of the air, and held it fast until they had registered it and christened it,—and won from it at last its secret of another element in nature!

Then we come to a still finer and higher kind of patience in the relations and influences of human life. The patience of the parent. The patience of the teacher. Is not all really effective teaching at least half patience? Why, you cannot train a horse, or a dog, without patience; you may go on for days and weeks, and think you have nearly done it, and then one rough, impatient blow, or even word, may spoil all! Yet what is that compared with the beautiful patience of a true teacher? The patience to explain a difficulty, and to find it not understood—and not to be discouraged, but try again; the patience with any wayward tempers;—and with the quicksilver disposition that cannot keep still;—and with the dullard whom you can hardly drive an idea into, and with the too-alert mind

that will jump on ahead and not wait and work things steadily out !

Yes ! it is when we come to patience with our fellow-creatures, that we begin to find the deeper meaning of Christ, in the text. The Revised Version tells us that the actual words should be—  
‘ In your patience ye shall win your souls.’

‘ In your patience possess ye your souls ’ sounds more smooth and sweet perhaps ; but the real saying of Christ, ‘ in your patience ye shall win your souls,’ though it does not sound so euphonious touches a deeper meaning. ‘ Ye shall win your souls ’ deepening in life, increase of that innermost soul-life and gain in that, not only in oneself but in others, for in the Christian perspective of life we belong to one another, and their soul-gain is ours. So in patient teaching there is this deep gain both to the teacher and the taught—and indeed that thought of winning the soul opens out to larger meanings as you look at it. It is by patience that you win the soul of things—not the mere outward form, but the very soul of them. The soul of service, for instance. I think one of the finest exercises of patience is, patience with inefficiency. You get a servant or employé who is stupid. And you like sharpness. You like to give a hint, and have a thing done right—a word, and know that that is enough. Well, when you have any one about you of that quick, understanding, efficient kind—be thankful ! And

when you haven't—take it patiently and let it be a means of grace! The world has to have stupid and blundering people in it;—and foolish ones. ~~I like that which~~ is told of Dr. Lyman Beecher: ~~how~~ in his last illness, <sup>often</sup> always brave and cheery, one day a friend found him looking sad and discouraged. 'What is troubling you, brother Beecher,' said his friend. 'Oh,' said the old man, 'I was only wishing I had been different in some things!' 'Why, what have you got to wish otherwise?' 'Well,' said Dr. Beecher, 'I was wishing I had been more patient with fools.'

Yes, there is a lot of soul to be 'won' that way; and often the very soul of service—slow, and even blundering to the end, perhaps,—but true as steel!

And so, to take another instance, you may perhaps get the form of liberty by sudden change, but it is only by patience that you win the soul of liberty. Do you elders remember how, when the revolution of 1848 was sweeping through Europe, toppling over thrones and despotisms by the dozen, one favourite outcome of the enthusiasm was—to plant trees of liberty? Paris was planted all over with trees of liberty—only, as the people were in a hurry, they were not real trees, planted and rooted,—but young trees cut off above ground, no roots, just stuck into the ground in the public places like so many Christmas trees. Did those new sudden liberties



last ? Yes, about as long as those trees ! All over Europe the sudden forms of liberty ; paper constitutions of the most admirable kind were as plentiful as blackberries that year. But the soul of liberty, ah, that was another matter ! The soul of liberty is something that cannot be made to order, or conceded by a frightened monarch's fiat, or planted like a Christmas tree ! So soon, so soon, those trees of liberty in Paris were dragged in the bloodshed of the coup d'état, and all through Europe they were being cast out like the withered greenery of a played-out fête day. True liberty is a thing of slow and patient growth—something that as Tennyson puts it 'slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent'—and in whose calm eyes is 'the wisdom of a thousand years.'

And so with all those great hopes and aims that look towards the elevation of man, the progress of the truth, the establishment of right and justice. We are all apt to be impatient of results. We want to see things moving faster. You have a scheme which you think would benefit the country and you want to see it adopted right away. I have ideas and thoughts of a broad common sense religion, as I think the very thought which was in the great heart of Christ—simple, practical truth that surely the world needs—but oh, how slowly it makes way ! Must we try to force things ? Or shall we fret, and turn pessi-

mists, and feel as if the world had got off the track? Nature rebukes us! That is a fine thought of Emerson's of how nature in its grand and silent and patient order seems to lay its touch upon man, as if it said to him 'Why so hot, my little man; why so hot?' Ah, yes—why so hot,—or else—so cold! Life seems so to tend to extremes—so many utterly careless and indifferent about all these better things—not caring whether they make way or not;—and, then, those who do care are apt to wear their hearts out with the fret and impatience of their striving. 'Like a star, neither hasting, nor resting,' was Goethe's way of putting the true life; Abraham Lincoln's way of putting it, was, 'we must keep pegging away!' A homelier phrase—but it meant about the same as Goethe's star!

Friends, it is in all this that there seems to me the great field for patience in life—in all these works and aims that are with us all the time, and form the staple of our living. Then, out of this patience in working comes the same patience, still, whenever the ordinary working friction of life gathers to some great stroke of sorrow or pain or disappointment. There is a word in the 'Book of Wisdom' that always seems to me to come with a special impressiveness on this matter—'make not haste in time of trouble.' You know, we are so apt to feel as if trouble was so much dead loss in life—and we try to hurry through it

as fast as possible, like a boy hurrying through a dark part of the road home. 'Make not haste in time of trouble!' 'Let patience have its perfect work.' What a work that is! Why, when I come across brave, patient sufferers in the sick room, as I do once in a while, I always feel as if it is they who do the ministering, not I! Don't you know the sort?—the pale face, shining with the quiet light from within, on the sick bed or in the invalid's chair—and never a word of complaining, not many words about themselves at all—the sort of face that it is a benediction to look upon, and which indeed hardly seems to need anything so strong as patience, seems to have got beyond that, into a quiet happy resting in God's will—but it is patience too, patience that has its 'perfect work,' and so is glorified.

Perhaps there are troubles in which it is harder to be patient than in sickness—the times of disappointment, when our best hopes and strivings seem to have come to nothing; times of utter discouragement, when we feel as if it would be such a relief to just lie down and close our eyes and be rid of it all—only we cannot do it,—nothing so restful, there is work to do, and engagements to be met, and people to face.

And perhaps, hardest of all, is it, to be patient under unjust imputations and suspicions. There are few people who live right onward, doing what they feel right, and saying out their honest

thought about things, who do not know what it is to make enemies, and to be misrepresented and perhaps sometimes to have slanders whispered or hinted about them. These are some of life's sorest troubles—it is terribly hard to be patient under such things. Yet that is still a good word—‘make not haste in time of trouble.’ Don't be in a hurry for vindication! When some one told Plato how his enemies were speaking ill of him: ‘It is no matter,’ said he, ‘I will try to live so that nobody shall believe them!’ Good—and yet a little hard and self-confident. I think that word of the Hebrew psalm reaches both deeper and higher:—‘Commit thy way unto the Lord and trust in him; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgement as the noon-day!’ And grandest of all comes to us the spirit of that great patient Christ. Every page of the gospels is alive with a holy patience, going so quietly on, resting in God! Once or twice, indeed, the sacred wrath that flashes up in him against some pretentious wrong or sleek hypocrisy, shews us that there was no lack of either strength or fire. But mostly what we see, is, a sort of infinite patience. What patience with those disciples, with their petty thoughts of thrones and power, and their small misunderstandings of the deep things he was trying to show them! What patience, though, to all outward seeming, that great thought which was in

his heart and which he was trying to teach his people, seemed as if it was just to be crucified with himself. What patience even in the uttermost pain—‘Father, forgive them: they know not what they do!’

Ah yes, friends, that is what it means. Here is the secret of the true patience,—not strength in self, but strength in God, not mere self-reliance, but trust; the feeling of another ‘larger will than ours’ working in and through this little episode in which we play our parts,—a mighty, silent, surely-working will, that we can trust even when all our little part with it seems to fail. It is not for prophets and saintly souls alone,—it is just as open to you and me in our small works and aims and troubles. When once you take in the thought of that enfolding almightiness, you cannot feel as if everything depends on your being able to carry through what you are doing to-day or to-morrow. The universe looks larger, time longer, eternity longer still. Happiness can afford to wait. Even the right can afford to wait. The world is not sinking down towards doom, but silently moving on. Be patient!—patient in doing, patient in enduring; and the crown of patience shall be soul, and life,—all that is noblest of life’s success, and all of life itself that lasts eternally.

## XI.

### DAY UNTO DAY.

*‘Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge!’ (Psalm xix. 2.)*

WHEN the sweet Spring days are with us it seems a seasonable thing to recall these ancient words, and to attempt some interpretation of that mute speech and language which they have for us. In some parts of the year the days follow on, one like another—with only quite at intervals any change to attract our special notice. But in the springtime, a single sunnier day has almost the effect of a new creation! The world looks perceptibly different from what it did yesterday—I only went away a week ago, and when I came back just four days after, it seemed a new world through which I journeyed, and a new song that seemed swelling from the cowslipped meadows, and the rich tender foliage of the woodlands.

And what is the song about? What have the days to say to us—especially what have they to

say about this deeper life we seek together here ? Is it only some general vague impression of beneficence ? When I was a child, and after the manner of good pious homes in those days, we children were questioned as to what the morning's sermon had been about, I remember that when we did not know, the favourite refuge was—' Oh, it was about being good ! ' That was a sort of safe generality ! And I am afraid that something of that vague kind is all that most people hear in these great voices of nature that are ever discoursing to us,—just some general impression of graciousness and beneficence in the world. But to those who have ' ears to hear,' nature has more to say than this. We want to listen more carefully. We want to look more carefully. We talk about the ' book of nature,' but it wants reading ; it is not a mere picture book. Yet many people treat it as if it were—and many only give the most passing glance even at its pictures ! Even those who tell you that they like worshipping, not in the church, but in the great temple of nature—well,—if you meet them on the quiet Sunday in that temple of nature, it is as likely as not, that you find them not with a song in their mouths, but a pipe—and for talk the common social gossip of the week,—harmless enough it may be, but not much worship in it. Now nature is good for more than that ; and the marking of its following days, may be something more than a



mere diary of what we have been doing or of what we have to do. To those who have ears to hear, it is as the old Psalm puts it: 'Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.'

Well, what is it that they say? I can but tell you what one listener has sometimes seemed to hear—but if that shall set others listening, it may be a help to their hearing more and better.

And first, let me speak of what a difference there is between the utterance of the day and of the night. The strain of day seems in the major key—of night in the minor. The impression of day, seems that of intense energy,—a certain sense of mighty, omnipotent, omnipresent life in all things; while on the other hand, night with its silences, and alike by what it hides and what it reveals, impresses, as nothing else does, the sense of infinity and eternity.

With day are associated all our most vivid perceptions of activity. It is not only that it is the time of man's most restless movement. It seems the same in nature. It may be only because we can see it better, but it does seem so. That is the peculiar impression. There is stillness nowhere. The earth seems teeming, bubbling over, with that mysterious thing—life. It is not only the birds and the insects with their ceaseless movement;—the still life of plant and tree is quick with subtler forces almost more wonderful

when we think them out. Cell adds itself to cell. A rhythmic life beats through the whole creation with a tremulous creative and developing meaning in it. The forces work everywhere to meaning. Not a cowslip or a pansy among all the myriads, but the tiny cells which every hour of damp or sunshine has been adding to what was there yesterday have all been added just so, working out a meaning. Whose meaning? Not man's! Man does not originate it, he only discerns it—and if man did not discern it, it would be going on just the same. And what little of it man does spell out and discern, is only the tiniest part, only the most outward and palpable part of all the meaning that there really is. Behind are, evidently, deeper meanings still, meanings that as you trace them back, work together, and blend into a solemn unity! Yes, to those who have ears to hear, the day is alive with this impression of mighty, omnipresent, divine activity.

And now, note the change of feeling which comes as day fades into night. The sun is setting, and our side of the busy world seems to be sinking into rest. The voices of children and the busy hum of toil are hushed. The notes of birds, the varied sounds of nature, grow fewer. Of course all activity does not cease, but a great deal does, and much of that which still goes on, we no longer see, and it ceases to impress us. Then, as the stir of activity quiets down, a new impres-

sion comes in—a sense of silent immensity. The very sounds which do still fall upon the ear seem only to emphasise the general stillness. Have you not noticed how sounds which in the day are quite lost in the general stir of the world, at night stand out with a strange clearness? In the country, the sighing of the wind, the rush of a little stream or the murmur of the distant sea, the cry of a night-bird and the dull tinkle of a sheep-bell; here in the city,—a footfall in the street—the whistle of a distant train. ~~Why, in the day-time~~ I can only hear the church clock in the next street—but have you never noticed how in the more quiet hours of night, the chimes will reach you almost from the city, and even the distant ~~boom from Westminster.~~ It is because of the general silence. When I go out into that silence, and stand in the full impression of it, I feel as if I knew what the Psalmist meant, when he shaped the word that was borne into his heart, into that deep saying—‘Be still, and know that I am God!’ And the impression through the ear is helped by the impression through the eye. We can no longer see our little world. What we do see is:

‘The evening air

Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars’

—a multitude of worlds so distant, and so vast, that involuntarily the thought arises: ‘What is man that thou art mindful of him?’

† Do you remember that sonnet of Blanco White's, which expresses this idea of how night hiding much, reveals infinitely more :—

'Mysterious night, when our first parent knew  
Thee from report divine and heard thy name  
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,  
This glorious canopy of light and blue ?

'Then 'neath a curtain of translucent dew  
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,  
Hesperus, with the host of heaven, came,—  
And lo ! Creation widened in man's view !

'Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed  
Within thy beams, O sun ; or who could find,  
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,  
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind.

'Why do we then shun death with anxious strife,  
If light can so deceive, wherefore not life ?'

Yes ! 'If light can so deceive, wherefore not life ?' Why may it not well be, that this very glare and nearness of our present life, may really hide from us a realm of being as much vaster than this, as the deep spaces of the stars are vaster than the little distances of earth ? So night enlarges the impressiveness of day. It is not good to be always looking at the details of anything ; so doing we are apt to miss the deeper, grander meaning of the whole. Look at your friend's face through a microscope, and all you can see is flesh

and tissue—and the more you increase the magnifying power the more it is simply material that you see. But look at that face simply with the natural eye, and you see—less of the tissue indeed, but that which is infinitely finer—meaning, thought, expression,—your friend. So look at the heavens through your telescope, and you see, indeed, its material and mechanical details far more clearly, but you lose perhaps something of its impression. Young in his ‘Night Thoughts’ said—‘An undevout astronomer is mad.’ I am not so sure of that. He came nearer the truth perhaps when he said that other word :—

‘By night the atheist half believes a God!’

The astronomy which seems to bridge the immensities and makes men feel as familiar with the heavens as with the earth, may, taken by itself, rather chill the sense of awe. It is not to the larger lens that ‘the night showeth’ its deepest knowledge, but to the inward eye of quiet thought and to the open soul of reverent feeling.

There then is the general impression, as I think, of simple day and night—this divine, all-penetrating activity,—this calm, silent, infinitude!

But it is when we pass on from the simple ‘day’ and ‘night,’ to the ‘day unto day,’ and ‘night unto night’—to the connected meaning, the cumulative pleading, the impression of the days and nights as they keep following on (that

is what it means)—it is then that these first grand but vague impressions seem to shape themselves into great helpful thoughts and words! That orderly succession, that unerring regularity—with which through countless millions of years the world rolls round into shadow, and still back again into the light—the very changes in its orbit which still keeps rounding back to the same seasons—is there no word in all this of anything higher than mechanical exactness? Would you find more suggestion of the divine, if there should come some sudden stop, a reversal of the movement? That has been, indeed, the common feeling: that is why people have so clung to the belief that once in the old Hebrew times, the sun stood still. In reality that idea of the sun actually stopping, was simply the literalizing of a couple of lines of a very ancient war-song imbedded in the old Hebrew traditions. The cry of a warrior-chief in the crisis of his people's struggle for existence—his appeal, in glittering oriental speech, to the sun and moon not to go down until he had fought that great fight through. That is all there was to it! And well for us to feel that significance of the long world-order. We feel it in smaller things, when we notice them. You do not feel more confidence in life—but less,—if some day you find that once in a while a heart-beat fails. And so, if I felt obliged to believe that once in the long centuries, the pulsa-

tion of the heavens had stopped for half a day, I do not think it would strengthen my confidence in God, but rather weaken it. I think man's real faith rests not on the chance of this solemn order stopping, but on the sense of its secure and massive certainty! The more you feel that unerring certainty, and the more that ties itself in with all the other impressions of the world's mighty life and meaning, the more the mere physical fact enlarges into a moral and spiritual fact. This orderliness of nature, in its higher aspect the faithfulness of God.—

‘Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,  
And the most ancient heavens, thro’ thee are fresh  
and strong!’

Yes, the world is safe with him! Our souls are safe,—not just ‘saved’ according to the small assurance of the creeds—but safe. As Mrs. Barbauld sings—

‘Thus shall I rest, unmoved by all alarms,  
Secure within the temple of thy arms;  
From anxious cares, from gloomy terrors, free,  
And feel myself omnipotent in Thee!’

But there are things more personal to us, that come closer home to our common daily living and daily need than this vast impassive order.

See how ‘day unto day uttereth speech’ of a certain righteous order working out in life.



Turn from the great movement of the universe, to our own little doings—the child's lessons, the woman's busy care, the man's tasks,—our pleasures, our temptations, our perplexities. Is it all a tangle through which we have just to pick our own way; or is there a moral order behind our little way, some principle of right in things, which we have just to try to keep hold of? You could hardly make this out in any single day. You cannot see much moral working out of life in a single day. For to-day—looking at to-day by itself, a lie may seem the very wisest and fittest thing. For to-day, by itself, it may seem quite the pleasantest and easiest to be selfish, or idle. But watch—as 'day unto day' moves on, and the unerring to-morrows come! Doesn't the moral meaning come out? Don't you boys and girls know that, at school? A day—any single day at school—does not seem much! What does the lesson of to-day amount to? What does it matter though it be left undone, or half done? What does it matter though the Latin be prepared from a 'crib,' or the arithmetic copied from someone else's answers? No! It may not seem to matter in any single day—but—'day unto day'—there you see it how the only thing that pays is right! And so it is in all the working out of life. It is 'day unto day' that makes the wise man, and 'day unto day' that makes the fool. It is 'day unto day' that makes

the good man—‘day unto day’ that makes the knave. It is ‘day unto day’ that fastens action into habit, and hardens habit into second nature. Why, it is ‘day unto day’ that even makes the blacksmith’s arm strong, and the rower’s stroke firm, and the cricketer’s hand and eye sure ; and so, far more, it is ‘day unto day’ that rivets the chain of vice, or that silently builds up the strong, good, wholesome manhood, in which is the real joy of life and the strength and hope of the world !

~~And one lesson more.~~ ‘Day unto day’ not only brings out the moral issue of our own doings, but it brings out also the wise, good providence of God. Nobody will ever get much faith in God’s providence by looking at a single day. Take the world for any single day, and look at it only so, and it seems a strange confusion. The wicked prospering and the good suffering ; wrong successful, and right hopelessly trodden down ; men who are sorely wanted, dying, and men who could well be spared lengthening out their days ; Cæsar in the purple and Christ upon the cross !

Or, take your own life in any single day and it is much the same : your best plans, perhaps, upset by others ; the thing you most crave, not happening ; troubles coming that you have not deserved ; and if you cry for deliverance, your prayer mostly does not seem to produce at the moment the least effect in the world ! So is it in the view of any single day. But watch the

days, 'day unto day'; watch them as they lengthen out behind you into long years, and it is very different. You begin to see a pattern in the years. Slowly a meaning shapes itself. It is not your meaning. You tried to shape the years to your meaning, and they would not be so shaped! You planned things thus and so and they came out quite differently. Has then all been meaningless? Your meaning failing, has there been none? ~~I think~~ Few people feel so, as they quietly look back upon their past life. On the contrary, you feel meaning all along, and not a smaller but a larger meaning than yours. Events that seemed utterly unconnected have silently fitted together; troubles you writhed and struggled against have by and by wrought you blessing; you feel that things have somehow worked together, and that they have worked together 'for good.' No! If I could see only one day's life, I could hardly believe in providence. But as I watch day by day, and see the silent unfoldings of the lengthening years, I cannot help believing.

Here, then, are the meanings which day utters 'unto day':—impressions of divine activity and divine infinity; and as we watch the unfolding pattern of many days, suggestions of a moral law that overrules our doings, and of a wise, omnipotent care that weaves all doings and happenings into the working of a larger will.

And now, one more final suggestion—which seems to clinch the whole—viz., that while ‘day unto day uttereth speech’ of these great things it is the night that settles all the speech into a sort of quiet certainty and knowledge. ‘Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.’ Perhaps it looks like a mere variation of poetic phrase. It is far more like a little flash of inspiration, so curiously does it touch the real difference. The busy days, with their clear cut activities and impressions from without, do seem like speaking, din their voices into our ears, often so many voices, and perhaps contradictions, that if it were always day we might only be confused. But the night comes; the din and confusion of the day subside; its noisy motives cease to urge us; the court of conscience is cleared for deliberation;—and then, at least to those who try to let night’s quiet have its perfect work,—the tangle begins to arrange itself—thoughts and motives appear in truer proportion, the manifold thinkings settle down into knowledge. Night does not speak to us so much as show us something; in the darkness and the stillness, light seems to rise up in the soul. Oh friends, let night have its perfect work, as well as day! Night is not only for pleasure and society—and sleep—it should be partly for quiet thought, and prayer, and the discerning of the deep knowledge of life!

That is the knowledge that we most of all

need ! ‘ Him I reckon the most learned scholar,’ says Emerson, ‘ not who can unearth for me the buried dynasties of Sesostris and Ptolemy, but who can unfold the theory of this particular Wednesday ! ’ Yes, some clearer discerning of the strong worth of righteousness and of the silent care of God, and out of this, some firmer hold on daily duty and daily trust—these are the lessons of the passing days. Well for us if we learn them : For so shall each day be more to us, and we be more—and all our life be more ; —for as the same philosopher says once again, — ‘ ’Tis not the measure of a man, his apprehension of a day.’

## XII.

### ON HAVING THE COURAGE TO BE DEFEATED.

*‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ (John xii. 32.)*

SOME, in contemplating the cross of Christ, are most touched by the thought of its suffering, its agony. To me, above all things else, shines its unquenchable faith! That central word, ‘I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto me,’ is a mighty word of confidence and trust. It suggests to me some thoughts on the good that may come out of defeat if you have the courage of it. The closing of Christ’s earthly life was to all human sight—defeat. There was no glory in the cross in those days. And we know Christ’s shrinking from it. That agony in Gethsemane, that cry, ‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me’—that was no divine mirage of prayer, no mere praying for the sake of example. I have no idea indeed that it was a shrinking

from the mere physical pain—it was surely the sorrow of leaving his great work, and leaving it hopelessly lost and defeated. There is the deepest pathos of the cross! But yet, over all that, rises the power of his faith—that strong confidence that if he could have the courage of God's cause even to the death, that cause should yet triumph!

Well, we know how that faith was justified! The crucifixion was the real beginning of Christ's work. This work did not really begin, even in his disciples, till the crucifixion tore away the veil of their mere Messianic ambition. And then was the real beginning of his work in the world. The mere multitudes who gathered about him in Galilee and Jerusalem were only prophecies of what his work might be! It was not by multitudes that his work was done. The strongest things in Christian history are not its great apparent victories. Paul's work looks a grand success to us as we see it in the long perspective of its world-wide results, but I doubt if it ever seemed successful to him. To make a few converts here and there; to leave a little band of praying, struggling Christians in the midst of great, rich old-world cities like Corinth or Ephesus; and perhaps to hear by and by things that made his heart sick, of their backslidings—not much like victory, that! His courage, like his master's, had to be the courage to be defeated. But still, out of those defeats have come the silent forces which



renewed the decaying ancient world, and which are still moulding the world's best life to-day. And we in our turn have to take up those forces, or rather to let them take us up, and to try our part to make those forces prevail.

And it comes to me as perhaps the initial lesson for all this—the lesson to have the courage to be defeated. The lesson never to swerve from the right for the sake of immediate or quicker success ; to keep on trying, right to the end, even though success does not come at all in sight ;—the lesson that in this courage for present failure and defeat lies the surest pledge of ultimate victory.

I know the attraction and power of success. Out in the world this is almost everything. ‘ Nothing succeeds like success ’ is the common saying. Men will pardon almost anything to the man who succeeds—not only blunders and failures, but even wrongs and crimes. There have been few more atrocious crimes in history than the coup d'état by which Louis Napoleon made himself master of France.—Perjury, the basest corruption of the army, remorseless slaughter,—at the time the world held its breath in horror ! And yet when it was consummated, when it seemed to have succeeded, when that gilded sepulchre of brilliant and rotten imperialism was reared above the bloodstained grave of liberty—how soon Europe was bowing before the conqueror, and English fashionables—yes and even fashionables

from Republican America—were begging for courtly introductions, and arguing that facts must be accepted! And so, in lesser things. Let a man acquire great wealth—does it matter much how he got it? Yes—something—I think more than ever perhaps before—but still, not very much. He may have got it in any of a dozen shady and questionable ways, and society may sneer at him for it behind his back—still, when he has got it, there will be plenty to dine at his table and drink of his wine and smooth out the doubtful memories of his past career. That is what success does.

However, I am not going to trouble myself with that aspect of the matter. I do not think that it is in such directions that lie the deepest and subtlest temptations of the desire to succeed. Perhaps the very subtlest temptations of success do not lie in the direction of personal advantage at all, but simply in one's love of his work, longing to have it succeed—and most subtly of all—in one's longing for the success of life's nobler kinds of work. I think of the higher public interests and objects into which men of the finer sort throw themselves, the reforms, the institutions that they take up. They want to have these things succeed, they feel as if they must make them succeed. It is such a temptation to feel that for a success so good, and so unselfish, almost everything is excusable. One must not be too scrupulous! Any-

thing to keep the good cause from failure ! There is where the lesson comes in—to have courage to be defeated.

See how that lesson is needed in public life and statesmanship. Our parties, our leaders, our public men have very little to learn about the means of success. Political strife and conflict is reduced to a finer point than ever before,—not a dodge for gaining a point, winning an election, getting ahead of an opponent—not a point that they don't know ;—except this : the having the courage to be defeated. And yet, till they have this courage, they will never be able to do anything really strong or great in the world.

I do not wonder it seems hard to be defeated in such things. I have seen this again and again. There is hardly a country in which it has not been illustrated within the last twenty years. A party rises up, pledged to some noble progress, and by and by comes into power. Perhaps they carry their great measure—oftener not. A sort of dry-rot is dreadfully apt to creep into parties in power—or they have been too sanguine—and there comes some popular reaction against them. And then comes this trouble—that even those who stand for the noblest things so seldom have the courage to be defeated. They make believe it is merely a lack of organization. New tactics must be tried. Often they fall into the very trickeries and dodges which they have denounced

in their opponents. They think it is better to win with dirty hands than to lose with clean ones! But is it? Is there any real gain to a nation in any victory won by wrong or questionable means? No! A thousand times, no! The real gains of history may have been by parties—I have no word to say against parties as such—but those gains have been by parties so alive with great and true ideas that they could even dare to be defeated.

The greatest men, the noblest movements all tell the same tale. It is not the lesson of Christ alone—who was tempted with this very temptation—to mix in a little of the messianic glory the people looked for in order to win them, but who would be crucified sooner than swerve one hair's breadth from the pure religious work to which God called him. Look at Socrates—so grandly simple and earnest in his last address to his judges; no fencing then, no hair-splitting sophistries to evade the accusations.—Plenty of that 'Socratic' method in all the rest of his life; but not then—no technicalities,—not even flight. How easily he might have persuaded himself that he could do most good by keeping alive, so as to go on with his teaching! But no, he had the courage to be defeated—and that defeat was his ultimate victory, and made Socrates more to mankind, ever after, than he had ever been before. Or look at John Bunyan in Bedford Jail—twelve long years. And

they offered him his liberty, if he would promise not to preach. 'If you let me out to-day, I shall preach to-morrow,' said he. But what a temptation! How easy to have reasoned that he might as well give the promise—for if he did not, he must stay in prison, and could not preach anyhow. Or, he might have taken the promise in a sort of 'non-natural sense,'—just as some good men sign creeds and articles which they do not believe. But no! He had the courage to be defeated. For how could he know that the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' in writing which he wiled away those lonely years, would achieve a greater victory than any he could ever have won by preaching? And so with the movements in which not mere individuals, but numbers, whole religious bodies, have been concerned. Take the story of the early Quakers. Alone of all the persecuted sects, the Friends never attempted any evasion or concealment. The other Nonconformists met for worship in secret places, set a watch to get notice of the soldiers' approach—I remember reading of one of their services at which they had bread and beef on the table, so that if interrupted, they might pretend they were at supper. Well, I don't blame them. But the Quakers never did anything of that kind. They announced where their meetings were to be held. They found the soldiers waiting—but they met all the same. Their speakers were taken to prison; still they met as

before, and others spoke. The magistrates locked the doors of their meeting-rooms,—very well, they simply met out in the street. Only once, with a grim and probably unconscious humour, when the officers produced a warrant to carry the whole meeting to prison, they simply refused to stir.

‘Friend,’ said their leader, ‘thy warrant is to carry us, and thou mayst carry us if thou wilt, but we are not free to go.’ And all the wagons and teams from the neighbourhood had to be impressed to take them—a great popular argument for letting them alone. But nothing worse than that would they do. No matter, though they were beaten, no matter though they were imprisoned; they went straight on. They worshipped as they deemed right; married after their own simple fashion; would take no oath; would serve in no military company; would not even take off their hats. What was the consequence? Why, that generations before the other Puritans won religious liberty, the Quakers won it, were allowed to pursue their own religious ways in peace. It was one of the very noblest lessons in history of the power of the right when those who hold it are perfectly open, keep perfectly clean-handed, and are not afraid to be defeated.

Or, to come closer to our own time—what finer illustration of this courage can we have than that of the American Abolitionists—the memory of

whose struggles, and enthusiasm, and heroic constancy will live as one of the epics of modern history. And this is one aspect of their movement to be ever kept in mind—the way in which they had, so conspicuously, this courage to be defeated. They never soiled their cause by any trick or meanness in order to win. Even the fierce fanaticism of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry was half atoned for by the sweet and noble fortitude with which he took his defeat. But the whole Anti-slavery movement was about the cleanest as well as the most heroic of our time.

Let us come closer home. I think the same lesson is needed in many a way in private life and in the world's common work. In these daily doings, what is understood as 'success,' is, the making more or less of wealth, and so I suppose the equivalent of the 'courage to be defeated,' is, the courage to be poor. What a blessed thing it would be if there were more of this courage to be poor. What a pitiful chapter in social life is that of the shifts and pretences people resort to rather than own up to poverty and live accordingly! Is there any victory that way? I think that fear of frankly giving in to the fact of being poor lies at the root of half the corruption and meanness of life.

Look at it, in the larger field of trade and business. What widespread ruin and loss would



often be averted if men would only have this courage to be defeated.

In how many of these great failures that have been so disastrous—has it been just this story : no intended dishonesty ; only bad times, perhaps foolish risks, good money sent after bad,—and still they dared not face up and own it—and at last in the desperate effort to hold on a little longer, some false return has been made, and then finally the whole thing has broken down ! If they had had the courage to be defeated they might have saved the worst of the loss and all their character.

And so I might keep putting it to you in endless ways ! Always try to win, if you can win fairly and honourably.

You young people starting in life, hold a high ambition before you, but, have this noblest courage too ! Are you going into business ? You may come to turning-points, where success seems as if it would depend upon some rather questionable act :—have the courage to be defeated ! But it does not matter what you are going in for—there is no one of the many paths in life which open before you, where you may not any day be brought up suddenly by some sharp alternative of failure in the thing on which your heart is set—sometimes on which your very life seems to depend,—unless you will do something or say something, that the best in you condemns. Have

the courage to be defeated! Is this hard? Of course it is hard! But what then? Said the French monk, St. Cyran, when he was besought to desist from some course which his friends warned him would lead to his destruction: 'Sir, it is not necessary that I live,—but it is necessary that I do the will of God!'

I have called all this the courage of defeat—and yet is that all there is to it? Even so it would be something very noble. But is that all? Do you remember Story's 'Hymn for the Conquered'?—

'I sing the hymn of the conquered who fell in the  
battle of life—

The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died  
overwhelmed in the strife;

. . . . .

The hymn of the low, and the humble, the weary,  
the broken in heart,

Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent  
and desperate part;

Whose youth bore no flower on its branches, whose  
hope burned in ashes away,—

From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped  
at—who stood at the dying of day

With the work of their life all around them, unpitied,  
unheeded, alone,

With death swooping down on their failure, and all  
but their faith overthrown.

While the voice of the world shouts its chorus—hands  
 clapping, and hurrying feet  
 Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors,—I stand  
 on the field of defeat,  
 In the shadow, 'mongst those who are wounded, and  
 dying—and there,  
 Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-  
 knotted brows, breathe a prayer,  
 Hold the hand that is helpless, and whisper—" they  
 only the victory win,  
 Who have fought the good fight and have vanquished  
 the demon that tempts us within ;  
 Who have held to their faith, unseduced by the prize  
 that the world holds on high,  
 Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist,  
 and if need be to die !

'Speak, history, who are life's victors ? Unroll thy  
 long annals, and say !  
 Are they those whom the world called " the victors,"  
 who won the success of a day ?  
 The martyrs—or Nero ? The Spartans who fell at  
 Thermopylæ's tryst,  
 Or the Persians ? His judges, or Socrates ? Pilate,  
 or Christ ? '

Yes ! The hymn of such defeat is the hymn  
 of the real victory ! Not to-day ; not to-morrow ;  
 —perhaps not in our earthly sight at all, and yet  
 it is as sure as the law of gravitation. For this  
 universe is God's—and from its inmost force to

its outmost fibre it is on the side of truth and right. So the poet Lowell who gives us that strong word for the defeat,—

‘ Truth for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne ’

goes on !—

‘ Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own ! ’

Yes! slowly through the solemn sweeps of time the great righteous meanings of God work themselves clear, out of all the tangle and confusion. We know it is so in the everlasting fact of things! We see it in the larger view! Let us have faith in it also, for the small things of to-day and here!

### XIII.

#### RELIGION AWAY FROM HOME.

*'In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord.'* (Zech. xiv. 20.)

THIS was the old Prophet's way of putting it, that, in the good time coming, to which the nobler Hebrew life was ever looking forward, religion should enter into everything, give its tone to everything. It was simply carrying out a little further still, that old word of Moses about his great laws: that the people should write those laws 'on their door-posts' and 'on their gates,' and bind them for 'a sign on their hands' and put them up as 'frontlets between their eyes'; to be kept before them in the commonest things—he meant! He did not want those laws written up over the altar, just to be looked at on Sabbath days;—write them, all about your common life, he says: on your hand (to remind you every time you strike a bargain); between your eyes, to teach you how to look at things rightly; on your door-post, that your home may be sanctified; and

on your gate, that every time you go forth through it, you may 'set the Lord always before you.' A noble counsel! And this word of Zechariah's simply carried the same thought a little further. He looked on to a better time when all life should be consecrated, everything have some reminding of God's great will upon it—'Holiness to the Lord' on the very 'bells of the horses.'

That was the general spirit of it, but yet—why single out that special thing? Well—in our day the horse would naturally suggest either travel or labour; but there in the East labour was done by oxen—and the horse and mule were the symbols especially of travelling. So I think that this flashed out of the Prophet's mind as the expression for a religiousness so genuine and thorough that men should not only have it in the temple or at home, but take it with them in their journeyings; that they should not only have 'holiness to the Lord,' on their door-posts or gates—but even on 'the bells of their horses' when they travelled away.

The equivalent of that to-day would be—'Holiness to the Lord, on your railway ticket'—or, 'carry the commandments in your travelling-bag.' Life with God, in our journeying; in our sight-seeing and our pleasures; in our intercourse with strangers, in our week-days and Sundays away from home, and, indeed, in all that busy, changing life in which God is still with us, and it is well for us to feel that we are with him.

Notice, that the Prophet put this as touching in a single phrase the finest sort of genuine religiousness. And he was right! Because, it is when people are away from home, away from the folks that know them—when they are in strange places where the beliefs and ways of men are different from their own,—it is then that they are most tempted to throw off restraint, to shirk their principles, and to forget anything about ‘holiness to the Lord.’ Did Zechariah think that the Jews were in particular need of that lesson? I sometimes wonder whether, when any of them came to some city where there was only a poor mean little synagogue, with a mere handful of people attending it,—and where, on the other hand, there were fine, crowded, fashionable heathen temples,—whether they held to their own people, or went with the multitude to see the statues, and hear the beautiful music? Or, whether some of those respectable Pharisees who were so very straight-laced in Jerusalem, when they went on their business journeys to Rome or Alexandria ever dropped into the gallery of the amphitheatre, or went in the darkness into the still worse places of those great cities. On the whole, I think not. For, the one thing that distinguishes the Jews, through all their history, is—a sort of vehement keeping to themselves and their own faith. True, it was not a very lovable sort of consistency; it was rather a morose kind of isolation. ‘How



can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land ? ' they said ; but if they would not sing their own Lord's song, they certainly did not sing the song of any other god, but just hanged ' their harps upon the willows ' to sound no more ! But if in these more public demonstrations of religion, they did not fail when away from home, they were hardly men, if, in many a minor matter connected with their faith, they did not find it difficult to be as faithful among strangers as among their own people. So there it is that the lesson is everlastingly needed. It is so easy to leave the finer sense of responsibility at home. It is so easy to forget one's higher principles in strange places where one is not known. Men may write ' holiness to the Lord ' on the gate-posts of the daily life that fronts their friends and neighbours, but very often the bells of their horses tinkle to a very different tune !

To begin at the beginning of the matter—a good deal might be said about the opportunities for Christian life. The call for kindly Christian qualities, in the very journeying—apart from the larger subject of actually staying and living in strange places. I cannot help thinking that it is rather a pity that our old ideas of religious journeying should be framed on the old association of a pilgrimage—of people plodding slowly on foot from place to place. So that religion, like poetry, is apt to fasten on the old ways. People fancy

that the poetry of travelling is all departed now that we go by steam. But it is all nonsense ! There is as much poetry—and even romance—in travel, as ever ! I do not envy the man who can watch the grand rush of an express train, with its pillar of cloud by day, and its glory of illuminated vapour by night, and feel no awe in it ; or who can gaze out of the train on the changing scenery as hour after hour he goes speeding along, and find all barren. And so, there may be as much religion in travel as ever,—as much opportunity for quiet thought and worship, if that is your idea of ‘holiness to the Lord,’ or, as much opportunity for practical kindness and helpfulness if, as Paul says, ‘ye have so learned Christ.’ Why, at a railroad station,—in the midst of the hurry and bustle, with so many perplexed people about,—or in a public conveyance,—anything from an omnibus to an express train, what occasions for mutual assistance there are,—what opportunities for manly help to the aged and infirm, for chivalrous respectfulness to women, for kindness to the young, for pleasant courtesy, and quiet self-denial and self-repression, in a score of ways. Why, you shall not have gone further than a crowded ticket-window, without finding scope for half the Christian graces, and without seeing what an effect they have if even one or two will show them ! No ! there is no difficulty about the call or the opportunity, if only people keep their

hearts open and their eyes open. And why shouldn't they? I don't know why people should be considerate for others at home, and when they are away seem to think that there is no obligation except to take care of themselves? Is Christ's word about taking the lower seat, or Paul's about 'in honour preferring one another,' all obsolete with the Jewish feasts of which they were speaking. Set before you, in all your journeyings, whether near or far, not the too common motto 'every one for himself,'—but rather that old watchword of 'holiness to the Lord' in its specially Christian interpretation of kindness and helpfulness to man.

And, at the same time, do not forget its other interpretation of feeling and thought towards God. You know it is one of the common complaints of the day, that we live so fast we have hardly any time for thought. Does it seem whimsical, if I suggest that the very swiftness of travelling brings a certain compensation, in opportunities for meditation peculiar to itself? For, that very swiftness makes other occupations difficult. A railroad train is not a favourable place for talking long; you cannot read all the time, and after a while, even the most beautiful scenery palls upon the jaded sight. When you sit back in your corner, and to the measured panting of the engine that strains on like some huge 'monster of the prime,' your thoughts shape themselves into an unuttered rhythm! A capital time, not merely

for thinking over that business-talk you had just before starting, but if you will, for thinking about these deep themes of religion. There, also, where many only find the gate of sleep may be the gate of heaven—it is there, if you will open it and enter! If you hurried over your morning prayer,—or perhaps forgot it—now you can make up for it. In that corner of a railroad carriage, with your eyes closed, you are as much ‘in secret’ as in your closet—and ‘it shall be heard by the Father who seeth in secret.’

If ever you go longer journeys you may find larger opportunities. It is only a while ago, that a busy Canadian merchant was telling me how the last time he crossed to England, it came into his mind that it was a long time since he had had a good read in the Bible, and so he set himself to read the Book of Job through,—‘and man!’ he said, ‘you have no idea how interesting I found it!’ Ah, friends! The world is not a bad place to live in;—even at its busiest it is a better place than a convent or a cloister,—better even for one who wants to live as a humble, devout Christian, if only, into the solitude of its hurrying ways you will put a little of that ‘holiness to the Lord!’

But now, enough of the mere travelling part—let me speak of the actual life away from home, of living Christian fashion in strange places and among people who do not know you.

It ought hardly to be necessary to speak of keeping the great principles of morality as sacredly abroad as at home—but I am afraid it is. We none of us know, till we are tried, how much of what poor righteousness we have, comes of the restraint imposed by our social surroundings! Do you suppose that the prodigal son intended to ‘waste his substance in riotous living,’ when he went off into that ‘far country’? Not he! He only went away because he chafed under the restraint of being ‘always under the eye of his father, and of that model elder brother—but, when once away, he had simply no inner principle to hold him back. How many find it the same? That is one reason why new colonies and settlements are often such wild places. When Henry Ward Beecher was once asked whether he believed in the doctrine of ‘the perseverance of saints,’ he said he used to do, till he found how some of the saints went on when they got out West. And one need not go West for that! One reads in the police reports sometimes of men who have been decent, steady citizens in their own little country town, doing strange things when they come into the city! The card-rooms of ocean steamers, or continental watering places, the purlieus of London and Paris, the foreign consulates of every great city, see terrible revelations of weaknesses and vices in people whose nearest neighbours never suspected them while they were

living steadily at home—perhaps who never suspected themselves of being capable of such things! ‘Lord, lead us not into temptation!’ Ah, it might teach us to be more tolerant towards the gross, common sinners about us, if we would realize how easy it might be to some of us also to go wrong, but for the surrounding of society and respectability! And it should teach us, too, what weak poor things all these mere outward props and restraints are. It is only the conscience within, the strong principle of an earnest Christian life, the life rooted not in the praise of men but in the will of God—that can keep us, not only in all our doings but in all our goings!

But now I want to speak of Christian life away from home in smaller matters, though still, things that have much to do with life’s beauty and happiness. For instance, I think a genuine, hearty Christianity should dispose us, wherever we are, to look out in a kindly appreciative spirit on the life and the ways of people, however different they may be from what we are accustomed to. That is the right meaning in the proverb about ‘when we are at Rome, doing as the Romans do.’ We ought to put away our poor conceits of taste and habit, to put away that tendency to depreciate strange ways and customs, and to grumble at not getting things as we have been used to have them in our own country or our own home. People who take their small local

tastes and prejudices with them everywhere and measure everything by them—miss half the value and delight of seeing strange scenes and mingling with new people. Why, in reality, one large part of the beauty and interest of the world, is in the infinite variety of manners, habits, characters among different peoples. Not only each country has a character of its own, but if you only keep your eyes open, each city, each district has! A kindly religion only tells you the same about this as a wise philosophy, viz., to get enjoyment and interest out of this—not discontent, and certainly not satirical amusement! Try everywhere to make yourself at home; put up with discomforts with a smile; accommodate yourself to the people where, even for a few hours, you find yourself; be considerate of their feelings, respect even their prejudices; look out for the kind and good side of their life—and the one sure way to find it, is to put your own kindest and best side out!

And finally, remember that this may be done, without swerving from any real principle in your own life. That is the last counsel I have to give—to take your Christian principle and faith with you, and through all changes of people, scenes or customs, keep that inner personal life unchanged and pure and whole. Do not obtrude your thoughts, or views, or faith—but, if asked about them, never shirk them. If this Unitarianism is



what you stand for, then never be ashamed of it, even where it may seem most unpopular; and when you hear it called in question, then own up for it, not defiantly but also never apologetically! not 'with bated breath and whispering humbleness,' but rather with thankfulness and even a certain pride. And almost more, do not omit to live your own religious life when away from home. That secret inner life of faith and praise and prayer is apt to become associated with special times and places, and perhaps the helpful influence of special voices, or special church surroundings; and it is very easy, when you are away from these, to feel as if that whole thing had to be passed by. You seldom find, away from home, anything that can be quite to you what the accustomed ways have been. No! but religion need not depend on these! Where the worship doesn't seem as if it could help you, you may help it! It is good sometimes to share a different religious life from our own. If you carry with you a loving, open eye for the good in the ways and thoughts of others, you will find everywhere the strong foundations of universal faith, and some institutions of worship in which you may draw with your fellow creatures to the feet of God, and feel that blessed fellowship of the great words 'our Father!'

I think, too, that it is especially good, when in strange places on the Sunday, to cherish what

we can of our own personal religious associations, —to recal the old friends and the worship they are offering, to think of the Lord's song, even if you cannot actually sing it ; to read in the old Bible, especially finding out again your favourite Psalms, or those other passages that have any root in happy, helpful memories. Such quiet times help to feed the soul, and to keep it the same through all variety of experience. For everywhere the same deep spiritual realities abide, and everywhere the same great heavenly Friend is near. So the one thing which need never change, and should never change in us, is that kind, earnest personal life in which Christ teaches us to stand before God. That is the life ! With that in us, facing towards men in kind and helpful courtesy, facing towards God in quiet, trustful piety, all must be well with us wherever we are. All our goings shall bring us on 'from strength to strength !'

And so whether with the busy hum of cities, or the quiet melodies of stream and grove, or the ever changing monotones of ocean, there shall mingle with all a music that is not of the outward ear, the 'low, contented song' of those who in all their ways 'walk humbly with God.'

#### XIV.

#### THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF TRUTH.

*'There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'*

*we often thought it* (Acts iv. 12.)

THESE words have a dreadfully narrow, exclusive sound, and have been commonly treated as if they were one of the most tremendous sentences of doom. But that is all owing to the special theological meaning which has been read in. The fact is, Peter was not speaking of 'being saved' in the special religious sense at all. *we have seen* *Substantive* *we have seen* *St Peter's* *mind* *It was simply* a word for the perils of his nation, a strong word, *of* where, practically, lay their one hope. See! the Jews had crucified Christ; they would not have his spiritual 'Kingdom of God'; their one idea was of violent revolution. That was the idea, that was the peril, against which the Apostles pleaded with this intense conviction that Jesus, even though men had crucified him, was yet their true leader and hope; this was the conviction which they summed

*he*

up in this one passionate utterance that there is 'no other name under heaven by which they could be saved!'

~~You see!~~ There was no intolerance in that! It was not the assertion of anybody's exclusion from heaven; it was simply the warning that in that great crisis and opportunity there was only one way with any real hope in it. And it was true! the people—rulers and all—were wrong! There was no help in any other way but that in which Christ had tried to lead them. Those Judases, and Theudases, and Barabbases, with their fierce writhings of revolt, had no real deliverance in them. We know that, from the terrible destruction which came in a few years, and scattered the Jewish nation to the four winds!

These are the simple and natural meanings which in after times were strained into the dreadful doctrine of all but Christians being eternally lost. Against this strained doctrine no word too strong can be spoken. It never was true; it never could be true in the universe of infinite love. The whole spirit of Christianity protests against it, and many a grand old Bible word cuts right across the narrow perversion of a few misunderstood sayings. The Great Father, is <sup>the</sup> Father of all! 'In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.' ~~St~~ Paul speaks of all peoples 'feeling after him if haply they may find him.' And what a wide, hopeful

word is that of Christ—that ‘they shall come from the north and from the south, and from the east and from the west, and sit down in the ‘Kingdom of God.’ And we have learned to see—I think it is the spirit of Christ which has most of all taught us to appreciate it—how much of light and good there is in other religions, and that goodness—anywhere, and in any name, is acceptable to God and on the way to heaven!

But now, while we thus rise out of the old strained meaning of the exclusiveness of Christianity, do not let us be blind to a true meaning which there was at the heart of that old error. That true meaning I may call, not the exclusiveness of Christianity, but the exclusiveness of truth. After all, there is only one kind of truth and right. There is only one way of a really saved, blessed life. Physical truth, moral truth, spiritual truth;—keep hold of the fact that truth is one, though men’s ways of shaping it out may be many. I think the mind of our time wants a little recalling to this. The fact is, that in the reaction from thinking that eternal salvation depended upon holding a special truth in a certain name, men have gone to the opposite extreme of feeling as if it doesn’t matter what they hold—or what they believe, or whether they believe anything; indeed many have come to feel uncertain whether there is any such thing as real truth—whether there is anything more than man’s thought.

So belief is undervalued. 'Character everything, belief nothing,' is the favourite antithesis—forgetting how much belief affects character.

Now all that idea, that it does not matter what a man believes, is false. *originally* One ~~might~~ gather that it cannot be sound in the higher levels of truth, because it is so conspicuously the reverse of sound in the lower levels. *must*

(1) Why, only look at it in the material universe.

Does it not matter what a man believes about this earth, and its substances and forces? Does 'the truth,' there, consist in this or that man's thought about it? No! In everything there is one thing that is fact and truth; and man may think it, or not think it,—it is so. What man has to do, is, not to settle what he will think, but to find out how the thing is. If he does not, all the sincerity in the world will not save him. There is no easy-going tolerance about the truth in nature. All is as rigid and exclusive as the Institutes of Calvin! The law of gravitation does not depend upon your acceptance of it. The force of steam, or electricity, is not affected by your not having made up your mind about it, and not liking to commit yourself on the subject. There is a ship beating up the mighty paths of ocean towards her destined port. The captain believes he is on the right course; but will that belief save him or his ship? Does nature care for the sincerity of his belief? No! If his belief

is wrong, then it is leading him not to safety, but to destruction. Why, half the calamities of the world come simply of people believing—often quite sincerely—things which are not so. The railroad manager believes this bridge strong enough. Does such belief save anybody?

(2) So with all intellectual truth. Take arithmetic: is not that exclusive? Does it depend upon what you or I think about it? I can just remember a period in my education when I was deeply convinced that  $7 \times 7$  were 56. I gave that answer with perfect sincerity, but that did not save me—I had to go down in class all the same.

9. Now, ~~I~~ carry on this reasoning—and I believe it is sound reasoning—I carry it on from material and intellectual things to the higher realm of things moral and spiritual. I know that here we are among things that we cannot outline or define in the same exact way—but it is not that the things are less real, or that the truth is less absolute. The fact that we cannot outline or define the truth is a reason for our being modest about our thought of it, but it is not a reason for not thinking about it, or for fancying that our thoughts do not matter much, or for being indifferent about it so far as we can discern it.

(1) Take moral truth. Is not that exclusive? Is 'right' merely what I may think, or what you may have assented to? Is truthfulness an open question? Is honesty?

*No! This thing  
an open question?*



'right' is something which is rooted in the very foundations of the world. I know that there are great variations to be found, in the ideas of right among various peoples. Look at the varieties of usage about marriage—or about the respect for life—among different peoples and in different ages. Yes, but these only shew that many discoveries and perceptions of what is right differ, as their science, their knowledge of material nature differs. But even where the difference seems greatest in the moral ideas and customs of mankind you can generally see how they are all tending to great common truths. The trend of all human institutions of marriage is clearly enough towards the single ideal—of the loving permanent union of one man and one woman. The Hebrews themselves in their earlier and middle history believed in Polygamy—but the Old Testament stories shew all through, the evil and misery which came of it, and the upward tendency was towards monogamy. So here and there to-day, you find people persuading themselves that marriage, altogether, is an unnatural blunder. They may be even vehemently sincere about this. But the great moral law of life is one—and works steadily on. The only result of these vagaries is personal and social rottenness.

So again,—the progress of all human law is towards greater regard for human life—life, a sacred thing.

In a hundred ways, the history of the world shows this deep moral unity. Look at the tombs of ancient Egypt, the epitaphs upon their dead ! The same qualities are revered there, which we revere to-day. So a really good man, is felt to be good, in the Zulu hut, or the Indian wigwam, or the slums of our great cities. No ! The great moral truths are essentially one. The right may be differently discerned, but, so far as it is seen, there is no elasticity about it. Truth, honesty, are not open questions. If a man tells me that he thinks they are, and that the obligation to be honest rests upon his own opinion about it, I want to keep clear of him ! And if he acts upon that opinion, and treats honesty as an open question—all his plea for ‘tolerance’ will not keep him out of gaol. And more, it will not save him from moral injury. The great moral truths and laws cannot be outlined or proved, perhaps, like the multiplication table, as the law of gravitation, yet they are just as real, and just as imperative and exclusive ; and whoever disregards them does so at the peril of all that is strong and stable in character.

I pass on to the loftiest realm of truth—spiritual truth—all that we usually signify by religion—the truth of the spiritual life, and its relations and powers and possibilities. I know that all this religious truth seems a subtler, vaguer thing, than even moral truth, and still less possible to

define ; and yet, the more you look into it, the more you will find that, deep down, its conditions must be essentially the same. This life in man,—albeit, it is not something you can touch, or see, or analyse as you can analyse a substance, or an equation,—is it therefore a sort of nothing—which has no certain truths or laws, or none that signify ? *NP* Is it one of the fundamental truths of man's being that the body must be kept clean and fed, and exercised—and then if one speaks of keeping the soul clean, or nourishing its life, or giving it due exercise, are these mere figures of speech, that have no meaning except what we ourselves put into them by our thinking—if we do happen to think—that way ? That idea, of one thing being as true and good as another, in our thoughts about the soul's relations and possibilities, if you only think thus or so, will not bear looking into. *NP* Does it matter nothing—provided a man is sincere,—whether he believes in Calvin's wrathful God, or in Christ's Heavenly Father ? Does a sincere Torquemada believing in burning heretics, correspond to the divine realities of things as truly as a sincere Fenélon full of charity ? Or, is all uncertain ? All, a mere fancy and imagination,—and for ever going to be so ? *NP* *At the day* Friends we hold the certainty of what has been gained for man's inner life, and the relations of that life, too cheap ! Man's soul has not lived in the spiritual universe through all this

slow measureless development for nothing, any more than his body has lived in the material world for nothing. Some things become just as certain by growing, as by any testing of lens or crucible. This dim, vast, haunting sense of God—this other vast, vague sense of further life to come, are not something that man has thought, but which attract, invite, compel his thought,—realities revealed in the very growth of the human race, and with the clearest and truest thought of which the well-being and the onward-being of man are inseparably bound up.

3. So here is the first practical lesson :—we want to get rid of that idea that belief is, in any realm, a slight and trivial matter, and that it does not matter much what men believe, and that it is of no vital import to try to have a deep and true belief. In the long run it is the inward thought which rules the life. Our being is related in its inmost life, to the vast and high realities of God and eternity and we cannot see them wrongly, or lose our hold on them, without life being in one way or another distorted, cheapened, and belittled!

Then lastly, out of this, grow some thoughts as to the true way of attaining to these higher realities, to the true belief—in which is life, the real happy onward life of the soul. Of course, the great primal secret is to think—freely, reverently, with open eye and heart for all light that

is within us or around us. <sup>But</sup> And yet even this <sup>thinking</sup> has to be qualified. There are such different ways of thinking—and of not thinking! ‘Think for yourself’ is one of the catchwords of the day, but what poor, slipshod thinking it largely is! Perhaps one of the things that most wants doing, is to get rid of that idea which you constantly find coming up in the common talk about religion,—that one man’s thought is as good as another’s—and that it is all only our thought anyhow. One man’s thought is not as good as another’s—not in religion, any more than in art, or poetry, or even in mechanics! There are things in the spiritual realm so clearly felt and seen by some, that they are revelations to them, divine certainties!

On the other hand, you will find a man thinking in a scattering, slipshod way—say about immortality :—he hears a speech about it, reads a lecture or two—cannot see that there is enough evidence for it, says he does not believe in it. ~~Ah friends,~~ we need to walk with something of a more patient thoughtfulness amid these deep mysteries of being. We need to recognise how weak and poor is our individual thinking, to be less confident either in our personal seeing, or not-seeing, and to give more study and more reverence to the great thoughts of our race, and to the discernings of the wisest and holiest souls. Those deep suggestions and convictions, which have come to them through conscience and spiritual weight are solemn and

*cast out*  
sacred things. They are not to be rooted up and picked at in the heckling of what passes commonly for 'discussion'; if you so handle them, you simply lose them—just as you lose the delicate music of a vibrating cord, if you insist on taking hold of the cord in order to verify the vibration. These deeper indications are rather to be listened to in the quiet of life's holiest hours, to be watched in their effect on those who deeply and really believe them, to be studied as they cast some light of nobler movement along the larger life of history; and especially to be studied in the word and thought of those few loftiest souls who have risen to be the teachers and leaders of the world, and at the head of whom stands the one incomparable Christ.

*teacher*  
And so the lesson rounds to the everlasting truth in these old sayings in which the first Christians urged that name of Christ so eagerly upon the world. They urged that light which had come into their souls, as the only light of life, and they urged Christ as its only teacher. The personal thought was true then, the deeper impersonal thought was true for ever. It was true in that time that there was but one teacher; it is true for ever that there is but one light, one truth, one right, one blessed reality of life according to the will of God. Now, thank God, that light which Christ has made so real, is found to have been never absent from the world, something



of it in all teachers and all systems. It has become the common daylight of an ever-increasing part of the world. Millions walk and live by something of it, who hardly think from where it comes; and every ray and touch of it, whether men connect it with Christ or not, helps in that growth of man, which is 'salvation.' The teacher, who, while perhaps never saying a word about religion, teaches more tenderly because of a quiet happy faith; the merchant, who though he may put up no text in his office, carries the golden rule in his heart,—every man or woman who, while perhaps hardly naming the Christ-name yet lives from day to day more purely, kindly, righteously, because of him,—these are all helpers of the light. And still, if you want the light at its directest, purest, if you want it in its most strengthening, vivifying power—it is here in Christ himself—waiting for the open heart of earnest, distinct discipleship.

*we must* ~~Yes,~~ honour all the world's great teachers, and they have been many. Believe that they have all had something of 'that Light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world.' But the Light is essentially one! It is essentially the same way of salvation to which they all point. Some may see further along it than others. Some may see hardly more than its human end of faithful, kindly life; others have seen as clearly its divine end of a Divine Love and an everlasting life; but the light is one, and the way is one.



## XV.

### HOW ABOUT GROWING OLD ?

#### A New Year's Sermon.

*' Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright :  
for the end of that man is peace.'* (Psalm xxxvii. 37.)

*' Such an one as Paul the aged.'* (Philemon 9.)

It is natural to look forward at the beginning of the year. To-night let us look a good way forward. How about growing old ? I want to emphasise that thought. It is not the common thought, and yet I am persuaded that in it, frankly faced, there is a power of moral significance and one of the most helpful lessons of life !

It is not at all the common way of looking at life and testing its quality. It is generally regarded as a sort of irreligious presumption to look forward to growing old. People seem to think that there is something solemn and specially impressive in the thought of life being prematurely cut off. It is put as the peculiarly religious appeal to the young—how would life look if they should be called away just in the flush of youth ? or to

the middle-aged to imagine themselves obliged to break right off in the midst of their busiest, most absorbing cares—just when they are feeling that their work can hardly spare them for a week or a day, let alone altogether! Well—I am not going to say that that is not a solemn thing. I do not know any way of looking honestly at life, that is not; but I do not think it is the most solemn. It seems to me a far more solemn thing—though not perhaps so striking—to think of life not cut short, not broken off, but living on, following out the course in which it is going, settling into a permanent and ever more unalterable mould.

People talk sometimes of what an awful thing it is for a wicked man to be cut right off in the middle of his course. Yes! but I do not think that that is anything like so awful as for him to go right on in it—on to age! I have seen loose, vicious men, who had sinned with a sort of defiant bravado, suddenly stopped, brought up hard and fast, by the firm quiet grasp of deathly sickness. And their passionate remorse was terrible—but even so it was a good sign. I remember feeling this, years ago, when, day by day, I had to sit by such a deathbed, and the man at first was stolid and sullen, but at last let out to me his deep bitter self-reproach and self-loathing—not any mean fear of hell, but the utterly overwhelming sense of what a base, pitiful thing he had made of his

life, and of how it was gone out of his power to retrieve it.—Oh! it was so sad; and yet I felt that it would have been a really sadder thing if he had not been stopped so, if he had just been allowed to live right on,—and had lived on, as such lives often do,—and had come, upon those lines, to old age! What an old age that is! The old age of worn-out self-indulgence, when the passions are burnt out, past exciting into real heat any more, and still the ghost-like memories of old sins lurk among the cold ashes, and mock the soul that every now and then keeps coming to a half-sense of its dead, foul, hardened state. And there are many kinds of old age, short of that, that are not much better. The old age of a shrewd, narrow worldliness, that has just lived to get, and to get more—and ever more—and has been successful—but, living on just that line, has gradually become incapable of anything else, incapable of any generous warmth, incapable even of any real pleasure in its own spending. Or—the old age of a vain and frivolous life, of a mere butterfly of fashion and society, who has never lived for anything nobler than pleasure, and on that line has lived on into old age, and still clutches with trembling fingers at the old vanities and excitements, and tries to make believe to enter into them, when it cannot, and the laugh is as ghastly as the grin that may be caricatured upon a skull!—Yes! Even in the worst lives.

one can think of, those about which people are most apt to moralize as to how they would be if they should suddenly break down, it is really a sterner thought 'how about their growing old?'

But we will leave that. I could not quite pass it by, for that is in the thought of growing old, and it is a side of it that every one needs to look at now and then. But that is not my special thought to-day. It is the other side that is in my heart—the better side—the thought of the beauty and worth that there may be in growing old, and of how this may come to be.

What it is, you know. We all see sometimes old people in whom age is manifestly beautiful; who do not shirk their age but wear it with a sort of triumphant grace, and in whom it suggests not a sense of fading and decay, but rather the presence of an inner strength, something in the heart as vigorous as ever. That was a good word that a strong-hearted old friend said the other day—that she felt as if she could wear out another body! You see old men, who though they are perhaps 'gone out of business' are still busy with useful happy cares, who do not give you the least idea of being really worn out, and whose minds and hearts are still open, and their interest and sympathies as fresh as those of youth. You see old people whom to speak with is a benediction, whom even to look upon makes you better—so strongly do they seem to be rooted in righteousness

and faith, as if they had got past the mists and doubts and struggles, and come through into peace and sunlight.—I suppose when we see that, we all feel a longing that if we are to come to old age, it may be so with us.

I suppose the first, ~~elementary~~ condition of happy, beautiful age, is, hard work—to take hold of something in life and do it with a will—do it so as to get honestly tired over it. It hardly matters what it is. The merchant's business, the scholar's study, the work of the teacher, the duty of the citizen, the patient labours of the philanthropist or the minister—let any one work with all his might—or her might—keep patiently at it, year after year, face its difficulties and discouragements, and still hold on—and then, when old age begins to come they will be ready for it, they will feel a wholesome tiredness and willingness to slacken off, and let others take their turn. They will feel the restfulness of old age. ~~On~~ There is a mighty beneficence in hard, earnest work! I believe that those who use their powers pretty much to the full, really keep them longest. I am sure that they are the least inclined to grumble and fret when at last their powers begin to wear out! Yes! I think that to work hard and well is about the basis of happy age!

The second condition of happy age is that you must have lived not selfishly, but thinking of others, helping others, finding your happiness in

others. Of all things in life, the character which becomes most utterly wretched in old age is selfishness. Selfishness is a small thing to begin with, but it is smaller and meaner still to end with! It is a poor thing to be everlastingly thinking about yourself while life is in its youth and strength. Still there is no denying that there is a certain satisfaction to be got out of selfishness in youth! They are one's own pleasures that 'self' can concern itself with then, not the highest pleasures perhaps, but still pleasures after a kind, and if your selfishness is careful, you may get quite a large amount of them! But as life draws on towards age, if you have got into the way of thinking only about 'self,' you have to think of self more than ever, but there is no more pleasure to be got out of it! Selfishness in youth may mean thinking about pleasures, but selfishness in age means thinking about your aches and pains. For no careful thought for self can ward off these—and you are left with the miserable habit of thinking—thinking—of self, and more and more it is aches and pains, and disappointments, and troubles, and grumbles that such thinking has to feed upon. ~~Lord save us from such growing old as that!~~

On the other hand, the thing which most palpably brings joy and happiness, and a very crown of beautiful age is the having lived heartily for others, having been interested in helping them,

having tried to find one's happiness in others, and in the interests and well-being of the great world outside us. Oh, friends, see what worth—and ever increasing worth—there is in this. And it is the thing that is possible everywhere, to every one. It is only to a small extent that we can choose what we will do in life. Men get set in their places, and they have to stick there, and make out the best they can—but if it is only the most dull and matter of fact business, the one choice they always have, is, whether they will do it only thinking of self, or whether they will do it with a kind, helpful consideration for all concerned in it or affected by it; as keenly as you will, but with a fair, frank brotherliness through all. That is the grace that may be about all human doings; and it is a grace that keeps growing, and the joy of which keeps enhancing and increasing all through life. Let a young man begin with that purpose of kindness and helpfulness; at first, all its scope is among those he lives with and works with. But the circle will keep enlarging. By and by he will grow to take a wider interest in the community around him. He will find himself impelled to lend a hand in this or that work for making life a little better, and setting wrong things right. Gradually he will come to be looked to as one whom men trust. And if, as life goes on, he can slacken off from business, or retire from it, it is much if he does not



find himself almost as busy as ever with one helpful thing and another that has gradually come to him to be done. I do not say this unselfish life is the easiest life to begin with, or always the pleasantest, but it is a life that grows ever larger in its interests and richer in the warm, honest friendship and respect it brings, and especially the blessedness of it comes out in growing old. For do you not see? The happiness in others is just the kind of happiness that does not fade with years! When selfishness is dwindling down from thinking about its pleasures to thinking about its aches and pains, unselfishness, which has the aches and pains, too, and feels them, still is not occupied with thinking about them—is thinking about the joys and sorrows and wants of others, about the movement and struggle going on in the world, about all the large interests of this great life of man. And all these things never change. They do not grow old, or lessen in interest, they are there for the old to be interested in, and to lose self in, to the very end.

Especially is it so good to keep touch with the young life about you. That is the secret of keeping young to the end. Do not grow into that so common tone of laughing at the enthusiasms of youth. Keep your mind open to the thoughts of the young men and women about you, and your hearts open to their joys and sorrows, their loves and hopes,—and then there will keep growing

upon your heart the sense of that great Life 'that evermore makes all things new.'

And then, I cannot help putting as the last element of that life which brings happy age—an earnest part in the great truths and thoughts of religion. Every one feels that this is a beautiful thing in age, but if it is to be really beautiful and helpful to you then—it must not be something taken up then, but something that has grown up with your growth, and had part in your strong, eager years of life and work. 'Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth!' not merely believe in Him, but 'remember' Him,—think of Him, own Him in your life. Now, young men and maidens, while your life and nature are plastic, while your hearts are fresh, look up to the Infinite Presence with an earnest purpose to live in his great world, not idly nor carelessly; and with a worshipping heart as well as busy hands. Now, while your senses are clear to see, to hear, the finer glory of his world, watch for those finer lights, listen for those deeper tones of meaning and suggestion which are something more than colour or sound, which are the witness of the higher life in the universe to the higher life in ourselves. Do it now! If you do not watch for these deeper things now, the time will come when you will not be able to find them. The time will come when you will look on a glorious sunset and see nothing but colours—colours;—and listen

to the voices of nature and hear nothing but various, meaningless sounds. Ah, but there is more in it now for you, if you will ; and if you make that deeper meaning yours, now, it will not pass away—or need not do ; but it will grow clearer and clearer, till, as life grows onwards, the smallest ray of sunshine shall glisten with a holy beauty, and the common sounds of nature touch your heart as undertones of God ! Here is the help of religion in youth and all through life. It is not for any special creed, I argue—there is enough in any creed I ever heard of, to be this help and joy, if men will only love the best in it—but I do think that with such large, simple, tender thoughts of God and man and the great life to come as ours, we should be the readier with an earnest, unashamed, manly piety, walking through the Lord's great world with uplifted faces, kind hearts, and busy hands, helping each other, and owning through all things God's mercifulness and patient love ! That is the religion of Jesus Christ ! That is the spirit he was ever trying to help men to ; that is the spirit for which his great words plead with us still,—to let it have a larger, more honoured, cherished place in our hearts and among the interests of our busy lives.

All these are the ways to a happy growing old. I do not mean that thus age shall come without deprivations, and pains, and fading, and decay. These have to be ! These frames, these senses

which are the organs and instruments of our life have but so much power, and the failing has to come ; but still, where life has been of this nobler kind, even the failing and decay are touched with finer meanings ; and on the broad experience of the world, such growing old is happy—happy in a wholesome tiredness ; happier still in loving and being loved ; happy, crowning all, with a sweet and silent joy in the sense of the great Father's love, and of the life that cannot die.

Only a word more. Do not think of this as the way merely to happy age. It is the way to the strongest, most effective, happiest life all through.

Young men and women ! if you should be suddenly called to-morrow to face the great silent change that comes to all, it would look less awful to you if to-day you had earnestly set your hearts to this Christian life ; or if, as I hope, there are many happy years before you this will make every one of them more happy, more worth living !

And you, brothers and sisters who bear the burden and heat of the day, who know what struggle is, and disappointment and care—here is the best help and strength and rest. ‘Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ For young, for strong, for aged,—all alike—there is no help, no leadership like his. Give him your youth—and he shall inspire you to life's noblest aims and thoughts

give him your manhood or womanhood, and he shall guide you through the fret and worry of the world, and strengthen you with a kind and patient power and a deep inner peace ; give him your age—and he shall lift you up above aches and pains and doubts and fears, into the sweet shining of immortal hope, and the quiet rest of those who know, in God, that all is well !

## XVI.

### RIGHTEOUSNESS NOT A POSITION BUT A DIRECTION.

*‘I set my face unto the Lord God.’ (Daniel ix. 3.)*

THAT is a good word about the young Hebrew, Daniel—it says so much. ‘I set my face to the Lord God.’ You see it just touches this subject of mine—because it does not say anything of whereabouts he stood, but only of the direction in which he was facing. And that is the real question about life: which way are you facing; in which direction are you really looking and living? Righteousness, not a position, but a direction.

Let me first make this distinction plain and then you will see the importance of it.

The common idea, then, of the difference between right and wrong, is, that right and wrong are two separate territories as it were, and that there is a boundary line dividing them, like the frontier line between two countries, and that any-

where on the right side of that boundary line is right. Or, people figure particular sins as if they were separate provinces in the general territory of wrong, each sin with its own boundary line, on one side of which you are in sin—but that so long as you have not actually crossed that line into sin, you are all right. And a great deal of the moral discussion of the world has been spent on trying to map out these exact lines where the right ends and the wrong begins, the line up to which you may go without sinning. And people have often supposed that if they could not lay down this exact line it must be because they were clumsy in their reasonings, but that certainly there must be such a line between right and wrong.

Well, that seems very plausible—and yet a glance into real life, and at some of the very commonest matters of right and wrong, is sufficient to shew, that at any rate there is a great deal of life, in which it is quite impossible to draw any such distinct lines between right and wrong! Try to draw the line between industry and idleness, and to say exactly how industrious a man ought to be in order not to be counted an idler. But you cannot do it! Or, take selfishness. Who can lay down exactly how far I ought to consider myself, and mark the point at which selfishness begins; or how far I ought to do what I like, or how far give up to others. Why, it cannot be



done, if you were to argue about it for a year ! Or, take such constantly present questions as that of right and wrong in eating and drinking, or any kind of indulgence. Is there any clear line to be drawn between what is temperate and what is intemperate ? Or covetousness. Certainly covetousness is a sin. But where exactly does it begin to be so ? There is surely such a thing as a desire to get on in the world, which not only is right but is necessary to any strong effective living. Now where is it, as this grows upon a man, that it begins to be the sin of 'covetousness' ? No ! You cannot tell. No one can !

So it is, palpably, with regard to a great deal of right and wrong. But really, it is so even in things which at first sight look so clear and distinct in their moral outline, that you are apt to say—that there can be no haziness or uncertainty in them. Take truth, for instance, or honesty. Truth is apt to look just as exact and precise as a mathematical figure ;—whether a thing is true or not true, whether you are telling the truth or not,—it seems as if it ought to be possible to define that anyhow. And honesty ! Is any one going to say that honesty and dishonesty shade off into one another—why it seems like sapping the very clearest distinction of morality. And yet it is so. No exact line can be drawn in either matter. If you had been sheltering a fugitive slave in the old days of slavery, would truth make it your duty

to answer the question if he was with you? Or, if you are bargaining about some goods you want to sell, does honesty require you to tell everything you know to their disadvantage, or is it enough if you answer truly every actual question that is asked you? Must truth be told to criminals when it will help them in a crime? Or if a friend has entrusted to you some important secret, and some inquisitive body has almost guessed it, and asks you if it is not so, what must you do? And so I might go through every part of human conduct, and the more closely you look into it, the more you will find that there is no such thing as drawing any absolute line between right and wrong anywhere.

But what does that mean? That therefore there is not any real difference between them, or that the distinction between them is imperceptible? Not for a moment. The difference between right and wrong is the most tremendous distinction in the world. No distinction of painful or pleasant can compare with it—only it is not of that sort. There comes in the thought—and I think it is a helpful thought, that it is not a difference of place or position, but of direction. A single illustration gives it to you at once. It is simply like the difference between east and west? Is there any dividing line between east and west? No! Who can tell where the east stops and the west begins? No one; and yet does that mean

that there is no difference between east and west, or that it is a hazy obscure difference? Not at all. Simply it is this same difference not of two places, but of two directions. You cannot possibly draw a dividing line between east and west, but you can tell in a moment whether you are going east or west, or whether your face is set towards the east or towards the west. And so, though there never was a line drawn which could divide exactly right from wrong, you can tell in a moment whether you are living in the direction of right or in the direction of wrong, whether your face is set, and your heart is set towards right, or towards wrong.

There, then, is the true distinction—and now let us follow it out a little and see the importance of it. For it begins at the very beginning of life, and it lies at the root of all clear, strong righteousness. And on the other hand, that idea that righteousness consists in not crossing some dividing line into wrong, is just the most treacherous and fertile source of wrong. Do you not see? As long as one fancies that sin only begins at some distinct line, one is tempted to go just as near that line as one can—while really the sin is begun, and going on all the time that one is facing that way! You can see how this works, from the cradle up. You mothers—you tell your little child, playing about you as you work, not to go out of the room! And it goes to the door—and

it looks out—and if you speak it says ‘ I didn’t go out ! ’ And then it puts one foot just on the threshold—very likely looking at you all the while—and then ventures it a little further—and still, when you shake your head, it says ‘ I haven’t gone out ! ’

Do you know why it is so hard to teach children the true lesson—not merely to keep from crossing some actual line of wrong, but to keep from looking that way, or going that way at all ? Because so many of those who want children to be taught that lesson have not learned it themselves ! Men and women are constantly just like that little child. They do not intend to sin, or at least they feel they must not, and they think they will not. But they will look towards it, and they will go to the very edge of it, and look over, and perhaps put one foot on the very threshold—and yet if conscience brings them up with a round turn, they try to justify themselves by saying that they have not actually crossed the line ! That is how nine-tenths of the world’s sinning comes ! Do people set out to sin ? Do they intend to do wrong ? No ! I do not believe they do. But they do constantly set out with that idea, that all that is necessary is to keep out of some actually forbidden ground of actual sin, and that so long as they do not cross its boundary line, they are all right. And the consequence is that they are often facing towards sin all the time, and

there being no such actual line, they find themselves in sin, unmistakably, almost before they know it.

Young men, don't you know how this often works in a young man's life?—this trying how near one can go to the edge of sin without actually going over the edge? A young fellow comes up from school, or from some country home, to take his place in the great world, and the false glamour of it by and by begins to get hold of him. But he does not mean to sin; he has grace enough to shrink from that. He cannot forget the grasp of the father's hand, or the pleading look in the mother's eyes, when they let their lad go. No—he won't sin, he says; but he begins to go with those who do; he hears the talk and brag of the pleasures they have; he half envies them the daring with which they sin; he learns the trick of the loose tongue and the wanton eye—he will put on the air of being worse than he is and knowing all about it—and he will go to places where it is all about—and still when conscience comes in, in quiet hours, he tries to take some poor comfort by making believe with himself that he has not actually sinned.

Sinned? Why his whole attitude is sin. His face and his heart are set towards sin all the time. For that is the only real question—not just where are you—but, which way are you facing and living?

And it is the same all through life. Just look up the record of any ten men who have got into jail, and you will find that nine out of the ten were led the first steps of the way which brought them there by that mischievous idea that there was some dead-line of sin, which if they did not cross, they would be right. And so they tried how near they could come to that line—and their faces were towards sin all the time—and as they went on and on in that downward direction, they never found that clear dead-line—and so, step by step, they still went on—until the very clue to the right direction was lost, and the life was utterly fallen into the power of wrong.

And not only is this the source of actual crime—and of what the world definitely labels sin—but also it is the source of all the poor, unworthy life that there is in the world. The people who are not exactly thieves—but who will take an advantage of you if they can ; the people who even while they are working have not their hearts really set to work, but are facing towards idleness and amusement ; that character which in business is always ‘ sailing rather close to the wind ’, and, still more common in the world, that kind of life which perhaps plumes itself on never breaking a commandment or doing anything wrong, and yet that has no real love of goodness, no genuine desire for goodness—that is the kind of life which keeps the world back, and keeps the church back,

and keeps the tone of society low and mean. If it were simply a fair fight between the honest men and the rogues, the honest men would win all the time ; but the trouble is, that the battle for the right is crippled by there being so many who expect to be counted in on that side, but who want to be on that side just as little as possible and whose faces are the other way.

Friends, this is God's call to us. Not just to keep from certain forbidden things, or from crossing some actual line of sin—but to set our faces clear the other way—towards right, towards all the just, pure, kind, godly life. It is Christ and all his setting forth of life that have brought this out most fully for us—no longer law, but love, no longer the mere keeping from a certain list of forbidden things, but active, forward-looking service. Yet even in the older religion, the larger thought was already coming out—in that grand summing up of all those negative laws in those two positive ones—‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.’ But when Christ gave those deeper teachings—that even the wish of sin and the look towards it are sin—then did he lift the true life of man for evermore out of any mere picking one's way among rules and lines, into a steadfast walking with uplifted faces, settled towards the right. That is the secret of effective life and of happy life to keep righteous-



ness before us as the whole direction of our living. There is not a day, hardly an hour, but this principle—of righteousness being not a position, but a direction—comes in. It cuts right through the moral casuistry by which the steps of duty so easily get hobbled and entangled, in discussing just how far this or that way may be pursued without some actual sin ! The difficult questions of duty, the questions whether you are really obliged to do this or that, or as to whether this or that would be actually wrong—such questions would settle themselves in a moment with one clear recalling of your heart to this great principle—that righteousness is not a matter of just keeping this side of some line, but of facing in the right direction, and doing the rightest thing that one can see ! Then does righteousness, in this thought of it, become not a drag, but a motive power, not a restraint, but an inspiration, not condemnation, but glory ! I do not say that it is easy ; there is no way of looking at it that can make righteousness easy. One may set one's face ever so earnestly in the right direction, and still the tempting passions will allure and the weak resolution will flag and stumble. The Roman moralist confessed that while he loved the better, he sometimes followed the worse—and even Paul himself says that though he delights in the law of God after the inward man, yet he finds another law in his members bringing him into captivity to sin and death.

No ! There is no grand moral victory even that way, even by facing the right way—and still, it is the only really onward way at all—and with the heart and the face set really towards right and God, strength must keep growing—and the sense of a Divine help that will not give us up, and the upward way becomes not quite so hard ; and even through clinging weakness and sin, to keep the heart still set towards the right is itself—no ! not victory, but the promise of some final victory, the prophecy of how at last we may be lifted out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God !

## XVII.

### EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL IN ITS SEASON.

A Sermon for People who abuse the Weather.

*'He hath made everything beautiful in its time.'*

*(Eccles. iii. 11.)*

IT was in connection with the weather that this text first lighted up into a living word to me. It carries me back to a wild spot looking out over Morecambe Sands, where I once went for a few days' rest, hoping for a fine winter week, and when for six days there was, instead, every variety of frost and thaw, snow and rain, and driving mountain mists, with only a few intervals of leaden and dull sky. But still how beautiful! And so the old text became a bright living word to me, and has been ever since, and I should like to make it a living word also for those people—and how many there are—who are perpetually abusing the weather!

Look at it first in this very matter of the aspects of Nature.

Everybody can see the beauty of nature at times, and under special aspects, when the spring comes—with its milder air, and that wonderful newness and freshness in everything, and the tender green of the springing grass and the first opening leaves—and that joyous singing of the birds which made old Isaac Walton say ‘If God hath provided such music for sinners on earth, what must that music be which he hath for the saints in heaven!’ Ah, there is no doubt about the beauty then! I think we feel that sweet, brief spring-beauty, more every year! And when the full, luxuriant summer life is on field and wood, and the hot still noon lies upon the rich expanses of deep green, and a hum of happy insect-life is underneath the branches, and the world seems to lie in a deep and still content—we do not want anyone to shew us the beauty then.

And when the glory of the later year has come upon the changing leaves, and the mellow sunlight gleams through the misty air, and the world’s rich life is fading, and the sounds of earth grow fewer,

‘And Autumn, like a faint old man, sits down  
By the wayside, aweary.

—Ah, we all feel that beauty. And even the fine clear days in winter do not lack admirers—especially if there is ice enough for skating!

But take it when things are all the other way; when the spring is not mild, but fierce and windy;

or the summer weather does not come ; or the autumn is only raw and dull ; or the winter is only an aggravating wet sort of cold—how many have anything to say about the beauty of Nature then ? And yet even then, I suspect the text is true, if we only had the grace to see it ! I suspect there is beauty in it all. I don't say I can always see it, still less that I can shape it so that others shall see it, but I believe it is there for us. Everybody has a bad word for fog or mist—and yet has the mist no beauty ? 'Go and ask Edwin Landseer,' I would have said, but he is gone. But go and ask his works—look at those wonderful pictures of his, of mountain passes, and the haunts of the wild deer,—and especially that one 'The Children of the Mist.' See how he loved the mist and what he saw in it ;—and yet, you know, all the beauty the artist can interpret on to canvas is short of what is there in reality ! Why, when there is a mist over the heath and the surrounding woodlands, have you never noticed with what wonderful beauty it brings out the different distances ; or if the fog is too thick to see any of the distances, look at the outline of a single tree against the dim gray haze, each branch, each twig in that strange clearness which only comes when the rest of nature is shut out ! Or, if you cannot find a tree, find a spider's web and look at the marvellous beading of its delicate tracery with tiny glistening pearls, such as no rain could string

upon those threads, but only mist! And then you will feel like that hymn—

‘ Oh God, oh good beyond compare  
 If thus thy meaner works are fair,  
 If thus thy bounties gild the span  
 Of sinful earth and mortal man,—  
 How glorious must the mansion be  
 Where thy redeemed shall dwell with thee ! ’

This matter, of the aspects of nature, is not the deepest thing in life, and yet it goes a long way in. Train yourself in eye, and still more in heart, to find the beauty in all seasons and all weathers, and you are half way towards that higher philosophy of being able to see something beautiful in all varieties of fortune and experience. And one especial condition of thus seeing the beauty in each season, is to be, yourself, in season. To be able to discern the good side of any phase of atmosphere or weather, you must be in keeping for it, you must be prepared for it, adapt yourself to it, take it as what you have to expect—and so not be afraid of it. You are not likely to see much beauty in a shower, when you are in mortal dread for your best bonnet ! You are not a fair judge of the exquisite forms of those great snow-flakes which come when the snow is moist, if you are wading about the streets in thin shoes ! But, accept the fact that here, in this island, we have to have so much rain, and be prepared for that,

and be on a fair level with it, and defy it, and live a simple, hardy, wholesome life—and above all things accustom yourself to go right on your course—rain or fair—and you will find two things : in the first place, you will find that there is not nearly so much bad weather as your timid folks imagine ; and second, when the bad weather does come, you will be able to look it right in the face without wincing, and you will see that it too has a beauty of its own ! And then, instead of looking at it with a gloomy discontent, and going out into it with a feeling of being ill-used, you will just meet it cheerily, find very likely a certain zest in it, and in the changing clouds and the falling drops you will see a study of ever-varying beauty. And when you hear men telling one another in the street ‘What beastly weather it is,’ you will feel as if it were a sort of swearing—and your heart will fall back upon its old song—‘everything beautiful in its time ; everything beautiful in its time !’

There is a good wholesome lesson about the weather : and it is a lesson for all life, too. It is the lesson of accepting the divine order of the world in great things and in small ; of trying to find out the grand harmony of the universe and then humbly join in with it. We forget that ! We are too apt to play out, or to try to do, some little self-willed tune of our own, and then when our little tune is overborne by the mighty cadences



of nature, we complain that there is no melody in life, when really it is only we who are in discord. We have learned that the great marked laws of nature must be kept—but we have hardly learned reverence for the ways of nature. To see many of the fashions of society, one would think that the measure of a thing's desirableness is its being against the way of nature—and that everything was beautiful not in its season but out of its season. When common radishes are a shilling a bunch in Covent Garden—you will see them on rich men's tables! The most fashionable entertainment is that which most turns night into day; and when nature would have us be lying down for our first sleep, foolish people are standing up for their first dance—and not the foolish ones only, but those—otherwise sensible people—who allow the foolish ones to set the fashions! Something strange, unexpected, out of its time, out of the simple order of nature—that is the thing! But is nature mocked? Do you get the real beauty of life and of God's world that way? Never! As one has well said—'the great teaching of nature is to be unselfish; to leave everything in its own place; not to encroach upon the divine order, but calmly to submit to it!'<sup>1</sup>

These lesser thoughts lead on to greater ones. They touch upon the beauty that there is in the larger changes and occupations and happenings,

<sup>1</sup> *Macmillan's Magazine*, Dec., 1873, art. Goethe.

of life itself, in their season, when their fitting time comes. There are many people who can only see any beauty in the summer aspect of life and fortune. But a whole, sound spirit may find some beauty in all life's changing experiences. In all except folly and sin. Those are the everlastingly unlovely things—never in season ; but for everything else 'there is a time,' as the wise man said, and the wisdom of life is to accept each thing in its time, to give each a full ungrudging place, to do its behest, take in its experience, make it fully and fairly a part of our life. Then we have a chance of finding out what of beauty there is in it, and there is some beauty always.

For instance—take work. Is there not something beautiful in all good, capable, strenuous work ? But—the conditions come in ! Just as with the weather—so with work, you will never find any beauty in it if you are afraid of it and only thinking how you can keep out of it. But accept work as the very thing you are here for, so get well on a level with it, and then you find its beauty.

'In its time !' This condition, too, must be kept. I cannot feel it beautiful when I find men still at their business, when they ought to be at home with their children. I cannot feel it beautiful to see the common work of the world going on, on Sundays. I cannot feel it beautiful to see little children at hard work when they ought to

be in school, or aged people still obliged to toil and moil to the very end. But good honest work, done with some pride and zest—and done in season, becomes in a way transfigured, and is L ‘beautiful in its time.’

It is those who have come to feel the beauty of work who understand the real beauty of rest. If a man does not feel the beauty of rest, it is from one of two things—either he has not taken right hold of work, or, he has taken too much hold of it, got to be its slave, worked out of season, worked till he has no care for anything else. Of course, all feel some pleasantness in rest. But the man who has not taken hold, who has not lifted his work, but has been merely dragged on by it,—when he lies down, he doesn’t know half the beauty of sleep that he feels who all the day has been doing his part not like a machine but like a man. To be perfectly beautiful, rest must not be stolen—that is, taken without having been earned : and it must not be compelled—the rest of one who only rests because his powers won’t hold out any more—but it must come as the fair end of good work, and be taken and made much of in its place—and then it is beautiful ! For how beautiful is the home-rest then, when the work is put aside—not only out of the hands, but out of the heart ; and the little ‘ children ’ have their ‘ hour,’—and books have theirs—and friendship,—and all rounds in to night and beautiful sleep ! How

beautiful the Sunday rest—when you are not too tired to make the best of it, to feel the spirit of its broad repose, not merely to rest,—but to ‘rest in the Lord.’ How beautiful the summer-rest, when it is rest, and you don’t take into it the fuss and excitement of the city! Yes! beautiful rest not something to give in to, or merely to take as a matter of course, but something to give your mind to, and rest heartily and lovingly, as if you believed in it!

So again, how beautiful is health in its season. ‘Rejoice, O young man in thy youth,’ says the same wise proverb-maker of the ancient time. Yes—rejoice in it. I don’t believe in that spirit in which you hear people say that they ‘did not know they had been well till they were ill,’ never appreciated health till it was gone. I call that a poor negative appreciation of one of God’s blessedest gifts! I think rather, that one ought, when one is well, to have a positive rejoicing in it, to feel the beautifulness of a strong, wholesome capable body; with the keen joy of living, in every faculty;—to feel with a joy, rising sometimes even into awe, the wonderfulness of sight, and hearing, and all these marvellous senses that open from our life into the great world.

And see! I do believe it is those who have most learned to feel the beauty of health, who will be prepared to find a certain beauty also in weakness and sickness. There is ‘a season’ for these things.

I do not want to preach any doctrine of sitting down patiently under man's carelessness and slovenliness, or that we should regard self-wrought diseases as divine mercies. There is a great deal of health in our own power, if we will only use it. Colonel Ingersol once said that if he had had the ordering of 'creation,' he would have made health catching instead of sickness. Probably! And so, on the same principle, he would have made wealth come by nature, and poverty to be the condition only to be achieved by effort. And so the children would plead that their lessons should have been made able to be sucked like toffy, instead of being so hard to learn. All that would be very pleasant to-day—but whether six thousand years of such easy-going would have as good results to shew, as the present plan, is doubtful. On the whole we may accept these ways of nature as they are—only, make the best of them, and try for all the health we can. And still, when we have done our very best, sickness is going to have its season—and I shall hold by my text, that it, also, has a beauty of its own. You can often see it clearly enough in others—that sickness is not necessarily lost time—and may be beautiful. At least I know I see it so—in lives made more sweet, and tender, and thoughtful by it; set deeper and firmer on the great realities of life, and sometimes actually glorified with a holy peace and trust. Yes! We often see the beauty in other people's sickness,

but how few can see it—or even try to find it, in their own. So here, too, we want to learn this lesson of ‘everything beautiful in its time.’ And the first condition of learning this is to take sickness when it comes, not with a grudgingly, injured sort of feeling, as if it was very unaccountable, and mere lost time, and waste of good life,—but with a cheerful willingness. Work on, as long as you can, but when you have to give in, give in handsomely! Do not lie worrying your heart out about the things that are not being done and that you would like to do.

And in the silent watches of sickness so accepted, in the tenderer converse with friends, in the calm stillness of a heart lying back as it were in the arms of God, you will find many a tender light of beauty come into your soul, that you never saw in health!

And so even to the end, and the last great change of all! Do you recall that word in the thirty-seventh Psalm—‘mark the perfect man and behold the upright—for the end of that man is peace!’ Is that no thought of beauty? of course death is not always like that. Death is not always beautiful. Why, life is not! The same sins, and follies, and misuses, and strainings of our nature which disfigure life, often disfigure death, too. That is why dying does so often strike people sadly and hopelessly. But take death at its best, death as the quiet closing of a life, that,

whether long or short, has been earnest and kind and good, and I think that, even through our tears, we can mostly see a certain holy and imperishable beauty,—a beauty of the mist that hides the further scene from us,—but yet which to Christian hearts has a great light and glory shining through !

Dear friends—the end of the whole matter is this : the wisdom of life is, to accept the world as God has ordered it, and life in its simple, wholesome, natural conditions. This is not for a moment to say that we are always to keep things just as they are. One part of these very conditions of life is the capacity of everything in God's world to be made into something more and better. The iron is in the ore ; the silk is in the caterpillar's web ; the man is in the child ; the nobler morrow is in the good use of to-day. The possibility of improvement everywhere is one of the very conditions that we have to accept and do our best with. But still, let us do even that best, with quiet acquiescent heart, reverencing the nature that is, as well as the nature that may be. Through storm or fine, through work or rest, through health or sickness, let us go with a happy sense that this is the great Father's world ; that ' our times are in his hands,' and that his times and seasons are the best. Then shall all times be ' good ' to us ; and we shall go upon our way, mostly rejoicing in the world and in our life, and always rejoicing ' in the Lord ! '



## XVIII.

### HOW TO REGAIN A LOST FAITH.

*‘Renew a right spirit within me.’ (Psalm li. 10.)*

How shall a religious spirit be renewed? If a man has once lost his religious faith, how shall he get it back? I think that this is one of the most practical questions of the day. For this last generation has been a time of great unsettlement in religion. Multitudes who were brought up in the older creeds of the churches have found themselves obliged to give them up. And at last many have found themselves without any faith—all adrift. But with most people any mood of antagonism to religion is only temporary. As life goes on, as they find themselves in the midst of all its strain and burden,—and trying to do their duty—they feel something lacking. They look back upon the time when they used to believe, and to read the Bible, and to pray, with a sort of regret. Especially are they apt to feel this way, if they have children growing up about them.

Somehow, they shrink from having those young lives grow up without any religious faith. Perhaps they even feel something of what a reality and power religious faith is to those who do sincerely believe it. I well remember such an one—a man who thought he had entirely given up religion, lost all faith in it, saying to me one day, in reference to a mutual friend whom he had been hearing preach : ‘ You know, I don’t believe in that kind of thing ; and yet, when I hear that man speak and pray, I cannot help feeling as if he had got hold of something that I haven’t.’ I think there are a good many in that case—who would gladly have back—not the old creeds—but something of the old faith and feeling. But how may it be ?

Of course the basis of all is,—simply living—the best we know. Whatever the particular method in which religion originated, it has been as something that has grown up, in man’s growth, a part of man’s development. In reasoning about it later on as an abstract proposition or theory before the mind, it may seem groundless, and be rejected ; but let life simply fall back into the basal condition of true living, and I believe that something of the old sense—of meaning and life in the universe, and of something more than this present short existence in our own being—something of the old, essential religious sense will quietly begin to grow up again. I have great faith in the quiet experiences of life itself. Nothing

is so likely to revive the sense of a still higher life and meaning than our own, as the quietly living up to our own highest life and meaning. Quietness and simple growth are marvellously good for mind as well as body. Let the excitements of controversy and debate settle down,—and the heart and will simply live by the best light they have (even though they do not quite know where it comes from) and the light will grow—and grow—and perhaps at last grow, beyond mere seeing, into faith.

But—beside this basal help of simple quiet living, there are some special counsels that I think have help in them.

I would put this first:—‘keep touch with the great worshipping habit of the world.’ In falling back as it were into simple human living—let it be into human living at its best. If you have got out of touch with this great worshipping habit of mankind, get into it again! Perhaps you would say, you cannot worship. No; but go where men are worshipping, and worshipping in deep earnestness. Give yourself a chance of feeling as the rest do! I think this much is due to this great world-wide institution of worship. It may often have been blind and foolish—yet even so, it is significant,—significant of some deep fact and need in human nature. Consider this sense of something in this universe greater than man, something which causes all to be, keeps all in being,—some-

thing to which man instinctively looks up with some sort of thankfulness for all the good of life, and some sort of appealing cry or prayer in life's hardness! Perhaps you may have lost all sense of what it is: you cannot see into the mystery—all you can see, is, here at this human side of the mystery man bending to it in instinctive worship:—well even that is enough—keep touch, here, with this highest thing in man, this craving for some divine relation, this worshipping habit of the world! Go, if you will, where the worship is least dogmatic: go where you are left freest to believe or not, go where the tender uplook towards the unknown divine is most joined with loving outlook and helpfulness and duty towards the human—but somewhere, where the hearts of men feel after God together, go—join with them all you can, open your heart for any influence that may come of it:—keep touch with the old worshipping habit of the world!

Then, secondly. Study the great thoughts and convictions of the world's great thinkers. Has this ever occurred to you—how much of the scepticism of the time arises from mere indolence? You see, it does not take much thought or study to come at doubt: but it takes a good deal of thought to work right through doubt—and multitudes never give that much thought to the matter. They have looked into some off-hand exposure of what are called the mistakes of Moses or the

errors of the Bible, and they feel as if it had all been rendered worthless. Or someone has pointed out half a dozen of the terrible shadows of the world with such force, that they seem unable to reconcile these things with belief in God and providence—and feel that all their faith is gone! But is that all? Are you going to stop there? Are you going to throw over the great solemn, permanent convictions of the world for a few puzzles of this kind? Well, that is just about what many have done! And what I would ask of them is, that they shall reconsider these things in the light of how they have seemed to the really great thinkers of the world. Because there have been great thinkers; minds recognized by all men as masters and leaders of thought—and who have spent their lives in searching into these deep mysteries—of being, and of this vast universe, and of the world's good and evil. Understand that the difficulties and perplexities are not of to-day—and the faiths of the world are not just of to-day! Study this long, solemn thought of man;—see how, with such rare exceptions, it has been a thought of faith—see how its leaders have been men of faith—not only the great religious leaders of the world, but the great philosophers of the world—with so few exceptions,—not solving the mystery of the divine, but feeling it a mystery to be bowed down to with reverence, as somehow having something divine in it. No! Do not get

all your study of this vast theme, which has been exercising the mind of man all through the ages, from the off-hand sceptics of to-day—study the really great thinkers (such as our own Dr. Martineau)—and though I do not say they will prove anything, or cause you definitely to believe again—they may make you feel that there is something to believe, if only you can get at it.

Then, for a third help—watch nature, watch the nature of man ; think of these as the outcome of all that is. And, especially, so watch them at the smaller, nearer end of things. I think many people perplex themselves by looking at the vast, far-away end of the mystery. Thus, they try to take account of the vast, immeasurable distances of the stars—those vast worlds, and of the awful world-space between ; and they ask themselves, how can there be a mind so vast ?—Or, they try to think of the immeasurable years and ages,—that these new thoughts of evolution (for instance) carry us back—how is it possible to conceive of one vast conscious mind, continuing still through those long, awful periods,—still God—God—unchangeably the same. I know ! When I think of it so—my own mind grows dizzy—only, really, the first difficulty is to think of those spaces and times at all. But leave all that way of thinking. Come to that which is close to. Come to the result, the outcome of all that is, in the little child, or the little flower. Well—something meant

that! No doubt about it close to! It is still a mystery close to, but it is a mystery of meaning, and beauty, and beneficence. Friends, keep your minds here—here at this near end of things, and before you know it, your wonder will be breaking out into praise.

And, lastly, when your wonder does feel like breaking out into praise—let it do so! Trust it! Perhaps this is the most helpful word that I could give any one about renewing his faith—do not wait till you can make it all out clear and straight, do not wait till your doubts are logically answered. Trust your feeling, even before you shall have justified it by any intellectual proof. A friend of mine was once standing out in the sweet sunlight of a summer day, by the side of a man who professed to be an Atheist—to have no belief in God at all. But as he felt the glory and beauty of the world, he said aloud—‘How much there is to be thankful for!’ And my friend could not help saying to him—‘Thankful to whom?’ Don’t you see! you can’t be thankful to gravitation or electricity! That very feeling of thankfulness implied something—some life—to be thankful to. Now I think that feeling of thankfulness is a very common one, even in those who could not tell to whom they are to give thanks! And I want them to trust that feeling. Do not choke it back because you don’t know to whom to direct your thanksgiving! Let it have way! If all you can



say is—‘O thou unknown mysterious power that causest all the beauty and goodness of the world to be, I thank thee!’ Well, say that, and you will feel the better for saying it; and from that very moment that great unknown will not be quite so unknown! Or, if some feeling of prayer seems to rise up in your heart—some longing for help, and comfort, or better strength,—well, trust it! I do not think that is at all uncommon. You have perhaps given up believing in prayer, and given up praying—you say to yourself that you do not know that there is any God to pray to, or that, even if there is a God, he would hear what you say. And still, sometimes, some old thought of some prayer you used to say long ago comes back to you;—or you hear some one praying—and something in the words or tone touches you—and your heart feels as if it could join in—well, whenever any feeling of that kind comes—trust it! Let your heart go!

And friends,—the more you follow those other ways I have spoken of, the more likely such moments are to come. If you will keep touch with the great worshipping habit of the world, so as to give it a fair chance of touching you; if you will do a little real earnest study of the world’s wide trends of thought and great leading thinkers; if you will keep an open eye to the wonder and beauty of the world, not in its vast and awful distances which daze you, but in the

life, and growth, and beauty close about you, which charm and touch the heart,—then there will surely come times when feelings will steal into your heart which are really religious feelings, and, if followed, will lead to religious faith.

That is about the way in which religious faith is going to come back, if ever it is to do. You must not expect that it will begin on the intellectual side. It is very seldom that doubts will disappear by being logically argued down. Religion certainly did not begin with intellectual arguments and so rise into feelings. It began with feeling—dim, vague feelings enough, probably, and then afterwards went on to the reasoning about these, or from these. So when the whole subject has become involved in doubt, or blotted out from the mind, the great thing is to let your nature settle quietly into a sweet and wholesome state, in touch with the best side of the world's life, open to every kind and reverent feeling—and gradually the feeling will begin to come back.

‘Be still and know that I am God’ was the wise word of old, and is about the wisest word yet.

And then, finally, when the feeling towards religion has begun to come back, and you want to examine it, and shape it into some distinct thought,—all I have to say is, be content to do this very generally—not attempting to make out any exact or detailed creed. That has been the trouble of the world all through—the restless trying to see

all round these great realities and to shape the thought of them into systems. Be not entangled in that error again. Have nothing to do with systems of religion which profess to lay down, or require men to believe, elaborate statements on the great relations of human life to the divine and the eternal.

Rest in these few great thoughts and feelings—the uplook to some infinite life that is in the vast whole ; the sense of an infinite care that somehow leads on the worlds ; the sense of something in man, and man's best life, of love and righteousness, too great to die.

Rest in these things. Be content not to know much, not to see far into the mystery. And still, all the time, hold fast to the permanent attitude of earnest living—doing all duty, and good, and kindness, that may be ;—and I think the ways of thought will keep clearing a little,—clearing towards greater thankfulness, and happier confidence in prayer, and a surer trust that death is somehow not going to be the end,—and altogether, a deepening sympathy with all the upward-reaching life of mankind ; and all this is ‘ faith ’ ; not sight—but very happy faith ;—not yet seeing the truth, but seeing the direction in which it lies, and living in that direction—and worshipping in that direction, and surely not in vain.

## XIX.

### ON RUNNING A LOSING RACE.

*‘ Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, [though] but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.’* (1 Cor. ix. 24.)

ANY fool can run a winning race; the strong thing is, to be able to run a losing race—to keep steadily on, even though you know you are not winning—to run the best race you have in you right to the end. I take that to be about Paul’s meaning. All have to run—but only one receiveth the prize. A shallow, easy-going philosophy would have said: ‘therefore it’s hardly worth running.’ But Paul was not one of the easy-going sort. ‘So do ye run,’ he says, ‘as if you meant to attain.’ ‘I therefore run,’ he adds, ‘not as uncertainly.’ And we know that was just how he did run his life-race—no hesitating, no slackening, doubting whether he was going to make anything of it. Little enough prize visible to him, but still he ran it out!

I never can help thinking of this word of Paul’s

and of this strong practical meaning of it, whenever I am at any prize-giving ! When I see those who have won the prizes coming up to the platform, amidst the applause which naturally greets success, my mind will wander off to think of those who have not got the prizes. And I cannot help feeling that I should like to hold a different kind of meeting—a meeting of those who have not won any prize, many of whom have known from the beginning that they would not—but who all the same have kept on and done their best,—it would be so good to speak some word of ‘well done’ to them !

And it is all so like to life—to the life of the great busy world ! Where people are all trying for prizes of one kind or another all their lives—and only one here and there gets them—so few out of all the toiling, striving millions ! Yes, it seems as if indeed the great thing we need in life is, after all, the art of running a losing race well, and that a losing race well run out to the end is a noble thing, in the innermost fact of it perhaps often the noblest thing—even as the master said : ‘many that are last shall be first.’

Let me say, to start with, that the first wisdom in the matter, the wisdom which underlies all living that is worth anything, is, to take life as a race, to recognize that it has prizes, to wish to get them, to resolve to try for them,—to put one’s very best power into one’s life. Some people are

just dragged through life ; they do not pull their work, but only are pulled by it, like an unwilling dog under a waggon. Not much in life that way ! Some again saunter through life masters of the art of taking things easy. Others again go through life, as if they were on parade—formally and correctly—obeying the word of command, but with no eagerness, no losing of themselves in what they are doing, no putting themselves to the finest strain of effort. No prizes, that way, either. God has made us for something stronger, intenser than all this. Hence he has ordained the divine stimulus of discontent and ambition. Hence he has strewed the world with prizes—prizes of wealth of power, of knowledge, of fame—and prizes too of higher callings than any of these for those who will rise to life's best and noblest mark. Poor enough, indeed, many of the prizes are in themselves. From childhood we are striving for things which, even if we get them, do not seem to amount to much. Very often, by the time we have won some prize, we find that somehow we have grown beyond it. Yet is the effort vain ? The effort ennobles man more than the mere thing he strives for, and only sets him—at least that is what it should do, taking his place in some harder and nobler race. So, I for one can never preach that 'vanity of vanities, all is vanity !' There is a certain truth in it, as everyone finds out in time—but it is one of those truths which must be

learned by experience—which must be come to in life's growing, it is not a thought to start with,—it would paralyse life's best effort. No, young men,—and women too—start in life hopefully—ambitiously if you will. Whatever you take in hand to do, or be, look to the best thing in it. Do not be discouraged because this or that profession is crowded. As Horace Greeley used to say, 'there is always room at the top!' Resolve to try and be at the top,—first and best in your line! Only, work and strive fairly—no getting first by any mean advantage, and then you cannot throw yourself into your work too much in the spirit of one running a race! And measure yourself against strong men, not against weak ones. There, also, will come in the value of running well even the losing race. For even if it is only in playing chess, it is better to play with a stronger player and be beaten, than to play with a weaker and win. Attempt through life the things that are difficult to you, not just those which you can do easily. There are some people, you know, who never will try at a thing, unless they are sure they can do it. A pretty poor vanity that! No! be frankly ready for the trials and races and competitions of life; and then, having begun, put in the very best strength you have; with strung nerve and tightened muscle, with restrained yet eager intensity, pursue the object you have started for, and so run that, if possible, you may attain.



So much for the spirit in which to throw yourself into the race of life. Now pass on a little further. If, as you get further on, you find that you are winning, I need not say much. You soon know if you are. It does not take long after a group of young men have started in life to shew who are going to be the winners. And good honest success is a fine thing, a thing that tends to make a man large-hearted and generous. Men that have tried hard and fairly for life's prizes and won them, are seldom ungenerous. They do, indeed, often become rather intolerant of weakness and inefficiency, the strong man cannot quite understand why others should not do as he has done—but they are seldom mean, at any rate. All lies in running the race fairly, if you do that and win, you will feel kindly towards those who have run with you, and your success may be left to take care of itself.

But then, as I began by saying—the winners are so few! Most people have to run the losing race,—and moreover they soon find it out. They see those who started with them drawing ahead, and do what they will, they cannot make up the lost way, cannot even keep up as they are. It is these who need the word of encouragement. It is so hard for them. It would be hard if it were only a short course at a holiday festival—hard to see that your chance is gone, not even a second place—you thought you might at any rate

manage that—but you are not even to be second, or third—only to come in quite at the rear ;—yes, it is hard to run even such a short race out and not drop off and give it up ;—but the race I speak of is the great long race of life, not the hot contest of a summer's afternoon but the long race of years. But the spirit that is needed for the losing race is still the same ; not to give it up, not to grow hopeless and dispirited, not to let the muscles slacken and the nerves relax—but to run it out, and that the best race that is in you, to the very end.

Ah, you know what this all means in actual life. You have seen it, again and again, even if you have not experienced it. It is that great multitude of struggling ones who have dropped behind, who are all about us in the common places of the world. You see them plodding on, some doggedly, some cheerily, some faintly and feebly in the lower places of their occupations. You know that this was not what they aimed for. When this man first came up to the city from his country home, proud and happy to have got out of the school days and to be starting among men—he thought of youths who had started where he was starting and who had become prosperous, successful men—and he set himself to try for that prize himself. And perhaps he ran well, did his duty, kept steady and true—but somehow other fellows went by him and he seemed to make but little way ; and

manhood came, and still he could not get on as he had thought of doing. And cares came, perhaps little hands tugging at his coat—very sweet to feel, and still weighting him in the race—perhaps sickness, now and then hard times, till by the time he has got to middle age all thoughts of prizes and of great success are gone—clean gone—and it is not so much a race for any prize he is running, but the race for life, the race to keep from being borne down and trampled under in the rush of the world, and left helpless and useless by the wayside.

We all know something of it. It may not have gone so hard with you and me, but, more or less, there is something of a losing race for every one of us. We know, each of us, the dreams of success that from time to time we have brooded over. Some of them perhaps have been realized—so that we have no right to sigh about failure—and yet in our own hearts we know how, here and there, in this thing or in that we tried for, we have failed and ‘we count not ourselves to have attained.’ Why, does any man ever count himself to have attained? Those who seem to us to have attained a fame in the world that is itself, perhaps, the noblest prize—did they feel so? Few names stand higher now than John Milton’s. But did he feel that he had won any prize—when he had had to sell ‘Paradise Lost’ for five pounds—and he was blind, and growing old, and impatient

with those about him, and the great cause of England's Puritan regeneration was lost? Did Paul feel much of a prize-winner? Did he do what he had started to do? If I read some parts of his life aright, I think that he, the one man of culture and standing among those humble preachers of Christ, dreamed of so setting forth the Gospel that it should attract philosophers and men of learning, triumph at Athens as well as Jerusalem, and take its true leading place in the great world. He did not do that. No! but he ran his race, bravely to the end. Not a word of repining for lack of success; only here and there a word about how 'the noble and the mighty would not hear,' which means more than meets the eye. No repining! Those humble converts were his 'joy and crown.' 'I therefore run not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.' And so you might take even those who seem to us the world's most successful men—and in their own hearts they are conscious of many things in which they have failed, perhaps it has always seemed more or less of a losing race they have had to run. Why, here is, to my thought, one of the deepest arguments for immortality:—this constant striving for something beyond what is, this tendency of the whole of things to bring life to these 'spurts' of new endeavour—these ever new incitements which are constantly keeping our nature to its tensest strain

and endeavour—and yet which seem for the most part to come to no real point of accomplishment. I cannot believe that, thus, the world's best life comes of looking on and on, and still ahead of anything that is, and yet that there is no beyond where those who really have done the world's noblest work and never knew it, and died feeling as if they had failed, shall know it and receive reward ; and even those who only tried, but did try faithfully to the end shall have some blessed word—‘ well done ! ’

And now a word about the two dangers to be guarded against in all running of a losing race in life. The first is the danger of becoming hopeless ; the second is that of becoming hard.

I suppose the saddest loss in life, is to lose hope. As long as hope is with us, all is not over. Hope may not enable the man in the rear to come in first, but it will enable him to run it out. It will enable him to do his best, if not the best. But if he gives up hope, if he says, it is all of no use, I can do no more,—then he just stops short, gives it up. Not often good in a race, that, never good in the sturdier efforts of life ! Alas for those feeble ones, who leave the examination room because the question paper looks too hard ; who give up trying for a situation because they hear that others are in the field with more influence ; who never fight any difficulty fairly through but back out as soon as it seems likely to prove too great for

them,—and who, in the longer, harder struggle of life, give up hope, and break hopelessly down, and cannot be roused to effort any more.

Oh, that is such a pitiful thing, not contemptible—but something for all stronger and more hopeful ones to pity, and to look at not proudly but with humility—for that gift of holding on hopefully is one of God's greatest blessings to a human life ! So it is a good word to set before ourselves, this word of running your race out, whether you are winning or losing. Parents—teach your young people to keep on at things, not to be continually running from one thing to another. The little lad who in his race with his school-fellows in the playground is taught to run right to the end even though he is losing, will be more likely to hold right on in the long, hard race of life.

Then, on the other hand, do not get hard. That is the danger of those who, though their race is a losing one, do run it out to the end. Self-reliance is terribly apt, when severely strained, to harden into a sort of bitter doggedness. A man who has to make a very hard up-hill struggle, who sees others go by him, and is being left behind in the race,—and yet will not give in, may so easily grow impatient of thinking about his fellow-creatures. 'They must take care of themselves,' he says, 'that is what I have to do.' And so may easily come, also, impatience of any thought of God. 'Why should I trouble myself about God,'

he says, 'does God do anything for me? Precious little I should get, except for my own toiling!' And so he feels as if faith and prayer are all delusion, and shuts up his heart within itself, and becomes hard in his endurance, and bitter that he should have so much to endure. Oh, friends, I think that next to a man's prayer for daily strength, and that he may be able to hold on in the race, should come the prayer: 'Lord, keep me from growing hard! Keep my heart tender and kind,—and sensible of thy love, and loving and helpful to those about me!'

That is the spirit in which to press on. More and more I feel that all life's lesser strivings merge in this: the sense of the strain and tension of life itself and the longing to be able to finish one's course, and to hold on to the end. Meanwhile do fairly to its uttermost whatever you take in hand: all tasks of youth, all studies of the mind, all fair enterprises of the world, all duties, offices, responsibilities, that come with life's older years and ripe experience. But if, as it well may be, all these separate strivings and efforts seem more and more to be parts of something greater than them all, and above them looms the sense of our whole life being one long race to which God has called us all—receive that thought with joy. It is the larger thought of life to which we should all be coming. And the more we do come to it, the smaller will seem alike life's failures and life's



successes, compared with life's simple faithfulness in doing right! Ah, what is all success, what are all earth's crowns, whether of laurel or of gold, or what the lack of them, or uttermost failure to win even the smallest of them, looked at against the solemn background of man's great life that is, and is to be? When you look at life in that larger aspect, and in the thought of its long race in this world of toil and weariness and temptation, when you think of the weaknesses that seem trying to break us down, and the hot, fierce passions that impel us to 'bolt the track,' and when you see how many do break down, and turn away from any earnest striving, oh, friends, I do not feel as if I had any heart to talk much about crowns or prizes! If we can be helped through from day to day, if we can have so much grace as to keep our faces towards the right, even though it is little way we seem to make, I think that is success enough—not any success to be proud of, but just to thank God for, very humbly, day by day.

No crown for it, no prize! Not for us such words as those,—but if it may be, some pitiful divine remembrance that we did try, and some blessed word of 'well done' to hearten us for the new beginning in that wonderful life beyond. Something of this will surely be for those who though their race has seemed no victory to them, still never gave in and ran it out to the end.

## XX.

### ON MAKING THE BEST OF SUNDAY.

*'It is lawful to do good on the sabbath day.'*

(*Matt. xii. 12.*)

*'Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty ; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.'*

(*Gal. v. 13.*)

THE subject of Sunday seems coming up again—and indeed it is likely to do. Sunday work, Sunday reading, Sunday amusements,—this restless modern life, so full of eager interests, keeps challenging every restriction in the laying out of our days. It is not Sunday only ; you cannot lay out your life on any sort of plan, you cannot arrange an hour for a committee or an evening for a Shakespeare reading, but something else is sure to come clamouring for that very time ! But especially Sunday ! Because, you know, Sunday has come down to us fenced round with so many and such very rigid restrictions, that once having put these aside, it has seemed as if there was no

clear reason for excluding anything. Indeed it seems to me it has been discussed on that negative side, of what one must not do on Sunday, long enough,—and I want to-day to consider it on the other side, of what is the best use of it. How to make the best of Sunday. I think few people realize how important a question it is. Few realize its proportion in the laying out of life. Look at it in that light for a moment. Think what it means in this busy, eager world, in which, all through the week, almost every man's time is given up to some enforced necessity of toil; think what it is that, after all, by this institution of Sunday, one seventh of even the busiest man's whole time and life is his own, at his own disposal. One seventh of life—ten solid years of the life of any one who lives to the three score years and ten. What a boon! What an opportunity! Is such a slice of precious life to be treated as if it did not matter what is done with it? Is it to be left as a sort of no-man's-land of time, to be occupied or not occupied, just as things may chance? to be left to slip away without plan or purpose; surely that is a pity—and yet that is the way with too many at present. They simply have not any clear thought or purpose for their Sundays. They have a few ideas about what should not be done, but as to what should, the Sundays come and are got through, very much as the passing inclination may determine. If

what the inclination points to, is challenged by any one, the answer is ready—‘what is there wrong? Where is the sin of it?’ Well, there may be nothing actually wrong, and yet, so, a man’s Sundays may slip away so as to have nothing to shew for them, so as to do him very little good, and even so as to be almost total loss and waste on the large view of life. I tell you this is a big question, this—‘how to make the best of Sunday.’

How to get at the true answer? Should it not be something about thus: by considering what are the elements of a true, wholesome, happy life which the six busy days are most apt to leave unsupplied, and then to lay out Sunday to supply these missing elements? And as I look at the busy, high-pressure life of people the week through, as I see what is the common race of work, and the common race of pleasure, there do seem to be three great elements of life sadly left out: rest and change, home and family life, religious culture.

I put as the first thing of all, simple rest and change. I do not say it is the highest thing, but it lies at the root of the whole matter. We want to get out of that groove in which the pressure of life keeps most of us. If I were asked to put in a single sentence a good practical rule for Sunday, I would say: put aside both life’s common work and common pleasures. Rest,—and change is one form of rest—rest is a beautiful, divine thing,—rest for the weary body, rest for the worried

mind. Why, it was rest that was the whole of the earliest Sabbath idea. 'Remember the Sabbath day'—you see the earliest command we have was a reminder of something earlier still—'remember the Sabbath to keep it holy,' did not mean to keep it as a day of religion, but to keep its rest very sacredly. It got used as an opportunity for religious uses, because it had such leisure for them, but the original idea was simply rest. It was the enforced institution of rest as a very sacred part of life. And the more any one wants to go back to the old Jewish 'Sabbath,' the more it is simply rest. The real 'Sabbath-breaker' in the literal, ancient meaning is, the rest-breaker, any one who infringes, without the strongest need, upon life's ordered rest-times or holidays. The worst Sabbath breaker in these modern days is not the business man who does something specially secular on Sunday, but the business man, or woman, who keeps employes working overtime without the most pressing necessity; the shop-keeper, who after joining in the half holiday or early closing movement, nibbles half an hour or an hour off it. But still, even when all this is kept right for ordinary days, life is often very hard and busy, and what is left from work is often claimed by society for pleasures and amusements which are almost as exhausting—and the first need for Sunday is, to have all that strain of common work and occupation lifted clear off from life.

Have nothing to do with Sunday work. So as far as you can, keep off even the thoughts of business. There was sense in the old Puritans who would not even talk business on Sunday. Of course I don't put it as a sin. I put it as one of those follies in which little leads to more, until life's great institution of rest is sapped and spoiled. Be thankful that in this busiest centre of English life you do not have your letters on the Sunday—especially as they are even now arranging for the delivery of very special ones. In all the great cities of America, there is no Sunday delivery, and though you can have your letters on applying for them at the post office, very few do so. A busy American once talked to me about having one of his clerks bring up his letters to him each Sunday morning, and asked if I would call him a Sabbath-breaker? 'No,' I said, 'I should call you an idiot!'

And the same thing applies to you young people and children. Are not you in business? Certainly you are. Your business is learning—and a pretty serious business, too, to judge by what I hear of the hard work that young people have to take home, and of the 'grinding' they have to do to keep a good place. And sometimes a good deal of this is left over for Sunday. Well, of course there is no sin in it, but it is a pity, for it is a bad, mischievous thing to be bent over lessons, hour by hour on the day which should be the rest-

day of the week. It is just as foolish as for a business man to be balancing his books. And I am the more earnest in speaking against it because it is the good ones who do it; it is the hard workers; it is those who want to get the very most out of their education, and to have an honourable place. It is the very ones, both in school and college, who are most likely to break down, by and by, from over-pressure. 'Over-work' it is called, but I believe that, nine times out of ten, it does not arise from overwork so much as from working wrongly and unhealthily, and especially from not taking care to keep this good solid rest and getting out of the groove every Sunday.

Then next to simple rest and change, which is the fundamental use of Sunday—next comes its opportunity for home life and family life. How sadly this is often lacking, especially to those whose strained and busy days most need it. Home should be the very heart of life, and a large part of life's inspiration and motive. It mostly is, when the home is first started—that first cosy nest that the two young people make together: how all their new life centres there. But by and by, life's needs increase, and the strain of providing for them increases, too. Perhaps success with its enlarging responsibility takes hold of the man, and he cannot be home so soon, or thinks he cannot; and when he is at home he has brought



his business with him, and if he does not talk of it, he thinks of it. I do not say it can always be otherwise from day to day—but still recognise that it is so, and that, so, many a busy man goes on for years, till he hardly knows his own children—knows them, I mean, in any real loving companionship. And it need not be so, if he will only make the best of Sunday. Here is a great, full day, from morning to night, once a week, all your own. All your own for your home and your family—and they too at liberty also.—The work put away, and the lessons put away, and all ready for the brightest, happiest time together. Is not that an opportunity? Mrs. Beecher-Stowe in one of her little stories, represents some model family as even getting up a little earlier on Sunday mornings, on the ground that such a day is worth making even more of than the common days. I can't go as far as that! Rest, still,—first of all,—and that extra hour on Sunday is very sweet. Only let that later hour be kept to. No lounging down at half a dozen different times! Let the Sunday begin with what should be the keynote of it all through—all the family happily together. I think some of the happiest times in a true home should be the meal times—bringing all together after all their separate tasks and ways. But most days, in many busy households, the meals have to be more or less broken, hurried time. It should be different on the Sunday. And all through,

on Sunday, let these two ideas, rest and family life, go hand in hand.

But now, if rest is the foundation, and happy family life the staple, I must still put as the highest crowning opportunity of Sunday, its opportunity of worship and of all religious and higher culture. Mark, why : not because Sunday is a specially holy day ; not because it is our duty to be Christians that day, more than any other ; least of all from any idea that a little religion on Sunday will compensate for a week of worldliness, but simply because that element is, after all, the highest side of man's life, and other days it is sadly apt to be crowded out, and this day, by the wise tradition of the past, place is distinctly assigned to it, and it comes fairly before us, with leisure for it, and opportunity for it, and companionship in it.

Friends, I put it to you, that it is a terrible mistake to treat this religious element in life as something of no particular consequence, and which may be left to any slack, occasional use or service to which you may feel inclined. You know the value of religion in the broader life of mankind. You know that among the influences which make nations it is one of the most potent factors. You know that a city, with its churches, and all that they stand for, wiped out, would be a poorer, meaner place. And do you think, any of you, that you can evade this truth, and leave religion

out, or leave it to others, and yet your life be all the same, and all right? You cannot! Set it down to professionalism if you will,—but I counsel you with all the power that is in me, to plan out some part of every Sunday to the great functions and charities of religion. It is not a matter of spending some large portion of Sunday in multiplied attendances at church. One good service for all, would be my ideal, if all could be present at one time,—and that anyhow, as far as possible, and this, in the morning, while the heart is fresh, to give the keynote of a music of earnest thought that should last and linger in the heart, through all the day. Feel what a great thing it is—this simple worship of ours! I do not decry even the world's gorgeous idolatries, and pomps of ritual and priestcraft—they are the various ways in which the sense of God, and the obligation to his will, have shaped themselves out among men—but especially I think we should cherish with a great thankfulness and joy, this simple thought of ours,—of all gathering together to the dear Father-spirit, and trying to realize his presence in these plain, quiet ways, and of hymn and prayer and the old Bible words! Oh, I think we should come together to this, as life's sacreddest engagement; I think we should uphold it, as a strong institution, not just supporting it, but putting into it our best manhood and womanhood and making it what it has in it to be, the strong bond

and rallying point of that finer, upward looking life among men.

With a strong centre and backing of worship in it, if you only keep that up with real interest and power, I am not much afraid of Sunday being spoiled or lost in the more varied freedom and interest of modern life. For these two things—home companionship and worship will set the keynote of the day to something of a higher, and quieter strain than life's common holidays. 'Sunday,' says Emerson, 'invites you to the noblest solitude and the noblest society.' You may not always be able to have these, but at least try for them. Let these be what you provide for. If that be the uplook of the day—the lesser questions will take care of themselves. Some years ago, the experiment was tried by the *New York Herald* which undertook to supply London with the most enterprising sort of Sunday paper. Well, it was an absolute failure; not because the London public became suddenly smitten with sabbatarianism, but simply because people did not want it. The very object which is proclaimed, 'to carry on the week's doings in an unbroken fashion,' is exactly what is not wanted. People want the break, not in mere work—but in thought, and subject, and interest. That was how it struck me, specially, in America. There the Sunday newspaper is an established institution, I was familiar with it for eighteen years; and it was

not a matter of Sunday work—all the work on it was finished on Saturday evening. But the real effect of it was to make Sunday a cheaper, commoner thing,—something less of a general rest-day, people didn't get out of the groove. So now, I should be sorry if the Sunday newspaper became a general thing, not because there is any sin in it, but because the day is too good to be cheapened down, and lowered to the poor level at which the work and worry of the world are apt to keep us six days out of seven.

And so with other questions which keep coming. Is Sunday bicycling and golfing wrong? No, of course not—but all the same Edward Everett Hale was right in the caution he gave to a great bicycle club in Boston once. They had asked him to address them because of his well-known sympathy with all free, wholesome, manly and womanly life, Sundays and all days—and of course he spoke warmly for this—but, all the same, he said —‘only remember that when you young gentlemen organize your cycling to spend your Sundays in great excursions, you are saying as plainly as words can say that so far as you are concerned you do not mean that the next generation shall have any Sunday.’ So is Sunday golf wrong? Is Sunday tennis wrong? And, of course, if any one will argue it merely as a question of what is absolutely forbidden and sinful, there will be some who will argue for football and cricket

matches, with quite as good reason, from the point of view of their preferences. Yes; but if you will simply argue it so, and act out your own particular preference to the fullest—it is simply saying, as Dr. Hale put it, that you do not want there to be any Sunday. For it is just the difference, which rules out these things, and makes Sunday a quiet, restful day, a little different from common holidays—it is that which made Sunday, and which keeps it on.

I know that it is more and more impossible to draw absolute lines, but that only makes it wise and right to draw one's own lines well on the right side of whatever would tend to cheapen or destroy the old convention of a universal, quiet rest-day. Put more emphasis on how to make the best of it.

So put away both life's common work and common amusements, and all this not because in the things put away there is some mysterious iniquity of Sabbath-breaking, but because we want there to go on being a 'Sunday,' and we want it for life's best uses.

Yes, this is the key of the whole thing. There is another side of life besides those necessities which keep us at the grind of toil or shape the eager recreations of the week. It is that higher side of life which has given us Sunday, and is the solid force that keeps it going. Still keep it, in its main character use it, for that higher side of life, not in worship only, but in all quiet thought-

ful living, ever facing towards the good. And the Sunday shall be no day of grim restraint, or weary listlessness, but the sweetest, purest, happiest day of all the seven, and the helper, strengthener, sanctifier of the rest.



## XXI.

### STANDING UP AND LOOKING UP.

*‘This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face.’ . . . And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee!*’  
(Ezekiel i. 28 ; ii. 1.)

I TAKE these words, as suggesting, in a vivid and striking way, the true mental and spiritual attitude for man :—that God does not want the grovelling spirit. He wants us to stand up before him like men. Then comes whatever touch of light, or impulse, is his word to man.

He may not speak to us exactly in the way in which those old Hebrew prophets seemed to hear him. We do not see visions in the lurid splendours of the sunset, like those which shaped themselves to Ezekiel. Those visions are so far out of our line, that as we read his telling of them, they seem almost tawdry and unreal! What are all those clouds and whirlwinds coming out of the

north, with 'fire infolding itself' and 'brightness having the colour of amber,' and out of the midst, strange living creatures, four winged and four-faced, with faces of men and lions and oxen and eagles,—and these, changing, amid swift fires and lightnings into chariot-wheels that flashed and went to and fro like living things?

A vision, one gathers, of the great Assyrian conquerors on their way to further devastations of the prophet's land,—but above all the confusion,—that which kept him from despairing—the likeness of a mighty sapphire throne, and on it a shadowy image clothed in ineffable splendours, which seemed the likeness of the glory of the Lord a token to him of God being over all, but so awful to behold that at the sight Ezekiel fell upon his face!

All that is strange to us. But though those visions are nothing to us now, that word which came out of them—'stand up on thy feet and I will speak to thee'—that is something to us for ever. For though the Lord may not speak to us in such visions, he is for ever speaking in some way. Nature is a whole volume of his words, for those who will have patience to spell them out, and not guess at their meaning as soon as they find a letter or two; in the providence of life, too, he is speaking to us; conscience, also, is his voice; and to the open soul there are borne in, in holiest hours, thoughts, impulses, and lights

of revealing truth, which come like the very word of the Lord, and which are 'the word of the Lord.' And the great truth, which this old word suggests to us, is, that in all these things, the secret of coming at the highest, divinest word, is, to stand fairly on one's feet and face the light. All shutting one's eyes, or hanging down one's head, or grovelling in the dust—all hesitating to look, or shrinking from the light, is no true reverence, is just the very opposite of what God wants. 'Stand up on thy feet,' and thou shalt know the divine meaning and word.

Really, this word of 'standing up on one's feet' is one that reaches a long way into things. A good, firm stand, is one of the first conditions of all capable manhood. Bear this in mind in education. Teach your children, when they are standing, to stand—no leaning up against walls or doors, no lounging over lessons or work.

It is not merely because it looks better, that the first exercise in a soldier's drill, is, to stand straight up. Body and soul are curiously tied together. It was no mere poetical fancy which, even from the old Bible times, made uprightness the typical word for pure and absolute honesty.

But it is as touching the attitude of mind and soul that this old word about standing has most suggestion for us. Take it in reference to nature and to this marvellous science which is interpreting nature's wonders to us. It is in this material

universe that there is the most wonderful outburst of glory in our time. I think that grander visions than ever ancient prophet saw, are coming to us now, through lens and spectrum, in awful cosmic forces, and the vastness of time and space. Even the commonest things are touched with the meanings of the infinite. The roadside pebble glistens with the handwriting of primeval ages. Little facts about plant or animal that once had no interest except for florists or farmers, are found to touch the secret of the evolution of the world. And dimly above all, something like that sapphire throne the prophet saw, loom the ancient faiths of man, which sometimes, as you look at them, seem all fading into vast shadows of impassive force and law, but which, now and again, change into a face of infinite beneficence and love !

Well, is not the one thing that men most need in presence of all this,—just this : to stand up on their feet, and face it all with manful steadiness of gaze ? Because, while some indeed are almost carried off their feet by it, many are apt to feel as if all they could do were to fall on their faces before it ; they are afraid of it, and dare not stand up and fairly face its meaning. There are not so many of these latter as there used to be. But science has had to conquer her right to be. Men have been too much afraid—especially those who have stood for religion have been afraid—to look fairly and fearlessly into the new light of nature.

They have been afraid lest science should injure religion, destroy their trust and hope. Now that is a poor spirit! I do not need to argue much against it here, because the tendency among Liberals does not lie in that direction, but I mention it in order to bring out the true attitude of intellectual manhood—‘stand up on thy feet!’ It does seem to me so noble a thing to be living in an age of such great investigations and discoveries. In these new voices of our time, it is still God who is speaking to us. I think it would be as true,—in the very deepest sense—to speak of the ‘word of the Lord’ by Darwin or Huxley, as to speak of the ‘word of the Lord’ by Moses or Isaiah. As true—not truer—perhaps that is what is most apt to be forgotten to-day. I sometimes wonder if there is not, here and there in society, a tendency for people to be almost carried off their feet—to be hurried along in the first rush of every new theory, to accept anything that calls itself science, as if even to hesitate or talk about waiting, were nothing but mental cowardice. Now, we do not want that extreme any more than the other. ‘Stand on thy feet,’—firmly, steadily,—neither afraid to look, nor yet mistaking every flash of light, for the final truth of God. We need not be impatient any more than afraid. On the whole, the mind of the world, all that is worth calling mind, is looking into all things very honestly. The really great leaders of science, are, every

one of them, men of such transparent love of truth and openness of mind, men of even such loving reverence for nature, that in the end they cannot fail to hear the full word of the universe ; and that will include not only the word through rock, and plant, and star, but the word through conscience and the soul, the older, greater words of duty, God, and immortality !

But this old word ‘ stand up on thy feet, and I will speak unto thee ’ is not only for these high visions of science or philosophy, it is a word for daily practical life. We cannot be always pondering those great abstract questions ; but lesser perplexities are coming to us every day, in which only the same spirit can find the real explaining word. Why, on that matter of providence, of the larger meaning of the happenings of life,—what a world of light people would see, if they would not fall on their faces so much, but stand up and look at things like men. As it is, in so many of the sorrows and troubles of life, instead of looking them in the face, to try and see what they mean, and how they might be remedied or avoided, people are apt to say, first indeed, ‘ It is the Lord ! ’ but then to cower down, as if all that was to be done, were, to be resigned ! ‘ It is the Lord,’—I believe it from my heart : ‘ these also are parts of his ways.’ But for that very reason, there is something else to be done than merely be resigned ! Very often, resignation is not what

the Lord wants of us. Sometimes it may be the very opposite of what he wants. Often, the troubles of the world come, not to ask resignation, but to stir us up to wiser, truer doings. Here is some great destruction that is the outcome of disregard of known laws of nature. There is an accident which comes of laws which are not known, but might be and need to be. Here a household is darkened by sickness, from some neglect of the conditions of health ; there is a life sinking into evil, from the spoiling of a weak, indulgent education. Yes, in a very deep, real sense, these things are the will of God, but they are not the meaningless, arbitrary working of his will. There is always a meaning in God's ways. Mostly, there is a meaning that we may find out if we will only try ; but the very first condition of doing so, is, not to fall on our faces in blind, abject submission, but to ' stand up on our feet ' like men.

And so even when there is no such practical meaning to be learned,—when, e.g., this mysterious presence death comes, without a reason that we can see,—when all has perhaps been right, and pure, and beautiful, and there seems just the sheer loss and pain. Some, you know, are utterly bowed down by this. It seems so sad, so dark, they are just crushed to the earth, and it seems as if nothing could ever lift them up again.—And yet,—there, too, I think that out of the cloud comes that old word, if only they can have heart



to hear it :—‘stand up on thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.’ Try to stand bravely up even in that great darkness, and the word of the Lord shall speak—not perhaps comfort—often there is not any real comfort possible—but in the grave, strong voices of duty, and patience, and eternal trust. Those also are the voices of God, and they have in them, not joy perhaps,—but a great peace and power for those who even in the shadows will try to stand up on their feet.

And so again with the monitions of conscience. I do not know anything in which we more need to stand up manfully on our feet, than in this matter of hearkening for what the Lord has to say to us in the way of duty. I think one of the commonest things is a certain shrinking from openly facing the question : what is right ? Even in the moralities of common life it is so. People will take the old word of the Lord,—or even the old word of man—the dictate of custom or society ; or they will act from impulse or feeling ; but how few will stand fairly up and ask what is right.

Especially is this so with regard to new duties, stricter thoughts of right, or finer standards of life befitting the disciples of Christ. I suppose there are few who do not sometimes have visions of some better life possible to them than they have ever yet attained. Some noble life touches them—some act of heroism rouses them ;—or it may be that the sense of some great human need strikes

upon their hearts like a divine call. For the moment, they feel the glow of the great thought, and it makes life bright with a new glory. 'It is the likeness of the glory of the Lord.' But how few can steadily face it! 'It is too high, too bright,' they say; 'how can such things be in our poor lives?' And they fall on their faces, as it were, till the vision is passed by.

I do not say 'seek high things for yourself'—but if they seek you, never be afraid to face them. There is still grand work to do in God's world; as good opportunity for noble life and service, as ever in the hero-ages of the past. Live with the forward look, and the upward look,—and if some new glory of the Lord's service dawns on you, don't fall down before it, but 'stand up on your feet' and face the light.

Only one thing more,—but there is something above the glory of nature and science, something above providence, something above conscience and the calls and visions of great duty.

I know God is in all these, but it is only dimly, as in mighty clouds out of which come flashes of divineness. And there is such a thing as the direct relation of our souls to God, the sense of the infinite spirit near us, and the opening of our souls towards him in prayer and adoration. And here, too, I think there is such meaning for us in that old word 'stand up on thy feet, and I will speak unto thee!' From the lowliest prayer

of any poor, weak sinner, crying for God's help and patient mercy, to the loftiest adoration of the saintly soul seeking the revealing light of the spirit—that is the true word. As Oliver Wendell Holmes says : ' To crawl is not to worship.' God does not want us coming to him grovelling and whining after the fashion which sometimes passes for piety. Why, some people seem to feel as if it would be the most terrible thing possible to have to stand up before God themselves, just in their own characters, as they really are. Their idea seems to be to cower down behind Christ, to shelter in his merits, or behind his blood as they put it,—to hide themselves somehow from God's wrath ! Oh, how utterly opposite is all that, to the spirit Christ teaches us ! The whole spirit of the gospel is that of standing up, and looking up tenderly, lovingly to God—very sorrowful for sin, but still trusting God's goodness too heartily to want to hide from him. What ? Before this great, infinite Presence that has made us, should we crouch like beaten hounds ? ' Nay ! Thou art our father ! We are only weak, poor creatures—still we are thine. Father, do with us as thou wilt. Thy very chastisement is for our healing and uplifting—help us not to grovel before thee, but to stand, with uplifted faces as the children of God ! '

And so from the lowliest position we touch the highest. It is not some consciously perfected

soul that has the clearest visions of God, but the soul that even out of conscious weakness, out from among life's thousandfold clinging faults and sins, still looks up to the infinite ; still holds him in its prayer, and will not let him go ; still faces to the highest and the holiest, and climbs, though it be with tears and bruised and bleeding hands, towards the light ! It is so manly a religion that Christ teaches ! The older religion of Moses and David and Isaiah was manly, too. It was the spirit of men standing strongly up before the Lord, listening for his word whether of guidance or rebuke ; in danger crying : ' he is my defence ; I shall not be greatly moved,' in sorrow and pain taking up that great word ' though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' Yes, the older religion was very manly ; but in Christ we learn the spirit of a still finer manhood ; looking up to God with even opener soul, and standing up before him in the glad confidence of the sons of God ! And to those who live in that spirit—standing up and looking up, the Lord is ever speaking, and his word becomes ever clearer !

Yes ! There is the finest, truest attitude of this life of ours. Not the mere bold standing on one's own feet, but standing up and looking up. A man may stand, defiantly, as who should say—' I am sufficient for myself ; I own no Lord, no master.' Well, there is a certain strength, even in that, but not life's strongest, nor life's highest.

No ! All this free, open thought, all this sturdy, self-possessed individuality of our time, does not touch its best till it looks up and reaches upward :

‘Except above himself he can  
Exalt himself, how poor a thing is man.’

Stand up—yes—but stand humble and reverent ; stand as in the midst of a very mighty and awful world ; stand as in the heredity of the world’s noblest lives and teachers ; stand as in the glory of manifold light ; stand as in the presence of the living God ! Yes, stand humbly and reverently, though still fairly on the feet that God has given you—and with some word in your heart like that of old :—‘speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.’

And so shall come the Lord’s word and the Lord’s truth ! For so shall come the thoughts of deepest, quietest wisdom, the feeling of infinite realities, the sense of light—not yours, but shewn to you ;—and all these shall shape themselves, more and more clearly, into the divine guidance and help which are for human lives,—into the ‘still, small voice’ in which the infinite spirit speaks for ever.

THE END.









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